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OR,
The Course Conspirators' Last
Campaign.

A TALE OF THE TURF.

BY J. C. COWDRICK,
AUTHOR OF "REDLIGHT RALPH," "RAINBOW
ROB," "CIBUTA JOHN," "OLD RIDDLES,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE OPENING DAY.

"EUGENE KIMBERLEE, don't you know me?"
"No, I must confess I don't; and yet, some-
thing about you is strikingly suggestive of some
one I have met. Who are you?"

"I am Beth Fenterton."

"The deuce you are!"

THE GIRTH OF LADY LUCY'S SADDLE SUDDENLY PARTED, THE SADDLE SWUNG OVER,
AND BETH WAS ALMOST THROWN TO THE GROUND.

The two young men grasped hands warmly. This meeting took place on the veranda of the Pansy Club House of the great Hippogriff Racing Association, not far from their Cedar Park Course and about a mile from the pretty town of Hunterford.

It was early morning of the opening day of the Hippogriff races.

The spring races of the Hippogriff Association was always the greatest event in that part of the country, and it was always especially great for the town of Hunterford. Thousands of persons came from far and near, and even on the worst of days there was never wanting a good attendance at an opening.

The morning of this opening day was all that could have been wished for, and the promise for continued fair weather was all that could be desired. The skies were bright, a gentle breeze was blowing from just the right quarter, and the track, which ranked scarcely second to the famous Saratoga, was at its best.

Already hundreds of strangers were in town, and they were continuing to pour in from every quarter. Many were nosing around the track and stables, early as it was, and many more were drawn toward the Pansy Club House, the headquarters of the Association.

One of these latter was Beth Fenterton. He had been around for some time, waiting as though desirous of seeing some one, and when Eugene Kimberlee came out upon the veranda and strolled away toward one end where no one happened to be, Beth's face lighted up and he hastened to join him.

Fenterton touched Kimberlee on the shoulder; the latter turned and the two young men looked at each other for some seconds without speaking.

Beth was the first to break the silence, in the words with which this chapter opens.

Before setting forth their further conversation, let us describe the two men.

Eugene Kimberlee was about thirty years of age, rather tall, and good-looking. He had dark hair, and mustache and side whiskers to match. He was well but plainly dressed in a dark suit, wore a white soft felt hat, and a very small diamond flashed like an electric spark on the little that could be seen of the snowy shirt-front above his vest. He wore no other jewelry or ornament of any kind. An expert reader of character would have set him down for just what he was—a gentleman of means, with a liking for blooded horses and the excitement of racing.

Bethuel Fenterton was younger. He was about twenty-six, about five feet four in height, and weighed one hundred and thirty-four pounds. He was a fine-looking young man, with light hair and mustache, and his eyes were of a deep blue. He was clad in a suit of blue flannel, and wore a straw hat and low shoes. There was nothing about him to suggest the dude, or fop, but quite the contrary. His face had an expression of determination and firmness, with a little of sadness in it, and it was a face that was open, honest, bespeaking a sincere heart.

"Well, Beth, I am mighty glad to meet you," declared Kimberlee, when they had enjoyed a good hand-shake. "I would never have recognized you, for you had a beard when I saw you last."

"Does it change my appearance so much?"

"It does indeed. I would not have known you."

"I am glad of that, for I shaved to disguise myself."

"To disguise yourself! What do you want with a disguise? But, say, what is wrong, that your father has parted with Lady Lucy, and to such a man as that young Alcander Burdick?"

"It is just that that has led me to come here in disguise," answered Beth, in an undertone. "But come," he added, "let's walk away where we can't be overheard, and I will tell you all about it."

"I am more than willing to do so," agreed Kimberlee, "for you are the very man I want to consult. I am in a deuce of a pickle, and perhaps you can help me out."

"You may rest assured that I will do so if I can."

The two left the veranda and sauntered off across the green, away from the vicinity of the club-house, the track, and the stables.

"Before we talk of other things," observed Kimberlee, "let me ask how the family are. How are your father and mother, and how is Gracienna?"

"The latter is well, and so is mother," Beth answered. "but father is not in the best of health. Business troubles have broken him down very much."

"I am sorry to hear that. Well, no one is near, so let me hear your story."

"First tell me what manner of pickle you are in, as you expressed it, since you thought it possible that I can help you out."

"I can do so in few words. My mare, Zuleika, is entered for the Hippogriff Handicap, which comes off to-morrow. I have a big sum at stake. I thought I had a pretty good chance for carrying off the prize, for I am sure Zuleika can outrun Faustina; but yesterday, much to my surprise, young Burdick came along with Lady Lucy and entered her. I feel it in my bones that the race is lost, so far as I am concerned. I may come in for place, but that amounts to nothing."

Beth Fenterton had stopped short at the mention of the name Zuleika, and as soon as Kimberlee finished what he was saying, exclaimed:

"You own Zuleika?"

"Yes; bought her only two weeks ago. Do you know her?"

"Yes; and if you can fix it so that I can ride her in the race, I will win it for you."

"What! Win against Lady Lucy?"

"Yes."

"It can't be done!"

"It can be done, and I can do it."

"But, look at Lady Lucy's record, and then look at Zuleika's! It is not to be thought of, Beth. A few pounds difference in weight will never keep Lady Lucy from coming first to the wire."

"You forget, Kimberlee, that Lady Lucy is to have a new rider. I have been her rider ever since she went on the track, and she and I know each other well. Were I to ride her tomorrow, then Zuleika would not have a ghost of a chance; but I tell you that I can take your mare and beat her."

"It is to be a two-mile run."

"I know it."

"Have you ever ridden Zuleika?"

"Twice, when I was South a year ago. I was the 'Brown' who rode her in two winning races that season."

"The deuce you are! Why, I have been advertising for you. I had no idea whatever that it could be you."

"Of course not. No one knew me there. I have not seen your advertisement, or I would have set you straight in the matter. But, no matter; I am here now, and I am glad to know that you own that mare."

"And you will ride her?"

"Haven't I told you that I am ready to do so, and that I will win you the race? I mean it!"

"Well, you shall ride her if it can be fixed. Not only was I cut up by the entering of Lady Lucy, but my rider has been drinking more than is good for him, and I am half afraid to trust him."

"You are in a bad fix, if that is the case. Who is he?"

"Dennising."

"I know him. He is a bad egg."

"So I begin to learn, but the time was getting too short for me to look around for another; so I have been trying my best to keep him straight. Now, what about your own case? Why are you here in disguise? What are you up to?"

"I came here with the express purpose of working a defeat for Lady Lucy, if it could be done by any fair means. I know her weak points as well as her strong ones, and things could not have turned out better for my purpose. With Zuleika I am sure of a victory. But this does not give you what you want to know."

"You know that Leonard Burdick died some months ago. He and father were the best of friends. They were like brothers. Some years ago father got into financial troubles, and Mr. Burdick helped him out by lending him a big sum of money. Father gave him a mortgage as security. Later, father made two payments, one of twenty-five thousand dollars, and one of fifty thousand. There remained seventy-five thousand yet standing. The interest was at a low figure, by verbal agreement, and the time was unlimited in the same way, although Mr. Burdick had it in his power to exact full interest, or to foreclose at any time."

"When Mr. Burdick died, and Alcander came into possession, he closed in on father at once. The cur has had a liking for Gracienna for some time, and he came to father with the proposition that if he would induce Gracienna to marry him, he would destroy the mortgage and surrender all claim. If not, then he would foreclose immediately. You can guess the result."

"I think I can, Beth. Your father, like a man of honor that he is, defied him; he fore-

closed, and that explains how Lady Lucy comes to be in his possession."

"Exactly so. Father kicked him out of the house and out of the yard, denouncing him as a son unworthy of the name he bears. The mortgage was foreclosed in haste, and father was stripped of almost everything, as it happened to catch him in a bad time. And so the case stands. Lady Lucy is in young Burdick's hands in just that way, and it will give me the greatest satisfaction if she is defeated. Why, the dog even had the insolence to ask me to ride her for him! He offered me a big fee, thinking I would no doubt accept it in our present circumstances, but he found his mistake."

"So I should imagine, the weak-eyed pup!" cried Kimberlee, indignantly. "The audacity he had in trying to win Gracienna's hand fairly staggers me. It served him right, and your father is to be commended for the action he took. We will fix Burdick out for his meanness, or my name is not Eugene Kimberlee."

"You will help me?"

"I will, and gladly, too. But, everything depends on you. Are you sure that you can win the race?"

"Barring accidents and unforeseen tricks, I can," Beth confidently answered.

"Good! I will trust you. Have you any money?"

"Only a hundred or so."

"That is not enough. I will put twenty-five thousand into your hands this afternoon. If you lose it, no matter. If you win, then you can return it to me. You must tap young Burdick heavily."

"Do not fear that I shall fail to do so. But, if by any mishap I should fail, I will repay you the sum if it takes me a lifetime to do it."

"You will do nothing of the sort. It is my risk."

"Then the return shall be yours, too."

"No, I will not have it that way. If you win the returns are yours. You—"

"No, Kim—"

"Well, have it your own way, then. Consider it a loan. I will risk as much on my own account, trusting everything to you, and will tap him on the other side. It all depends on you. Come, we will go to the stables, and I will fix the matter with Dennising."

They turned and retraced their steps, continuing their conversation.

CHAPTER II.

A TRICK OF THE TRACK.

The track and grounds of the Hippogriff Association, known as the Cedar Park Course, were among the finest in the country.

A brief description of them may not be out of place, together with a few items of information for the benefit of those of our readers who do not happen to be "up" in matters pertaining to the "turf."

Let us speak of the track first. It was of the usual size and shape, having two straight parallel stretches of a quarter of a mile each, with curves at the ends of a quarter of a mile in radius. It was perfectly flat, and was a good, solid loam soil, the surface of which was generally hard.

From the track to the grand stand rose a sloping lawn, green and well kept, on which a person could see over the heads of others in front without effort. The grand stand was six hundred feet in length, with seats raised at an easy angle, and with room between for comfort. It was protected from sun and rain by a light but substantial roof, which ran well over in front, affording shade for the eyes as they watched the flyers go around the course. The stand held about ten thousand persons, and would seat eight thousand. Underneath the stand was the betting ring, and in the front of that, shut off by a partition, was the telegraph operator's place, in direct line with the "wire." Opposite was the judges' stand.

The stables in connection with the course were capable of holding about seven hundred horses.

Here and there posters were up, announcing the races of the day, giving the names of the competing horses, the weight assigned to each, and other information of a needful character.

On this morning of which we write, when Bethuel Fenterton and Eugene Kimberlee retraced their steps toward the Pansy Club House, these posters were just beginning to attract the attention of the early birds who were out in quest of the fabled worm. Men here and there were making notes in their note-books, and at the same time were no doubt making mental

calculations as to the best and safest way to lay their money.

The race was to be an important one, but was not to be compared with the great Hippogriff Handicap of the morrow, which was to be a sweepstakes of one hundred dollars each, with ten thousand added, of which two thousand five hundred to second and five hundred to third.

But, more of that in its proper place.

Among others who were looking at the posters on this morning, and one who appeared to be particularly interested, was a gentleman with a full white beard, wearing a broad-brimmed black hat. He was of medium height, and his step and carriage were remarkably firm and erect for a man of his apparent years. He was dressed in black, his coat being a long frock, and he had something of a ministerial air about him. A pair of gold spectacles were saddled on his nose, and he held a gold-headed cane under his arm while he made notes in his note-book.

Presently he put his book away in his pocket, and sauntered off toward the stables, proceeding slowly, but with the air of one who knew well where he was going, and what he was going for.

Around the stables all was business and bustle. The hostlers and jockeys were there in force, attending to the animals under their charge, and joking, laughing and singing were heard on every hand.

The old gentleman made his way among them leisurely, looking at a horse here and there as chance offered, and now and again civilly asking a question or two.

Going on, he soon came to a door where he showed more than a passing interest in what he saw. This was at the place where the mare Lady Lucy was stabled.

The hostler had the mare just outside the stable door, and was rubbing her glossy coat, while a fellow who was evidently the jockey who was to ride her was explaining her good points to some admiring friends.

"And what animal is this?" the old gentleman asked.

"This is the Lady Lucy, sir," the jockey replied.

"Indeed! And do you ride her?"

"Yes, sir," with a good deal of pride in the tone.

"And of course you expect to win the race tomorrow."

"Oh yes, we have a dead sure thing on that."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I have some money at stake on the event. You must not fail."

"Don't you be alarmed, old man; your money is safe."

"That is what I like to hear, that is what I like to hear. But, the others are good ones, I am told, and you must look out they don't steal a march on you. I hear that Zuleika is fast, and that Faustina isn't by any means slow."

"That may be so, but they can't hold a dip to Lady Lucy."

While these remarks and more were being exchanged, the old gentleman had approached close to the jockey, and then by moving off just a pace at a time had drawn him some yards away from the other men.

"Say," he presently sounded, in a low tone, "would you like to line your pocket with five-hundred dollars?"

"That depends," was the quiet response.

"I will give you five-hundred dollars if you will lose to-morrow's race."

"You would have to bid higher than that, old man," declared the jockey, "and then I wouldn't sell out. No, you can't come that game here."

"I'll make it a thousand, and put the money right into your hands now."

"No, it's no use. I ain't for sale. Lady Lucy must win that race, or I lose more than you want to offer. Mr. Burdick has made it a big object for me to win, and you can bet your hat that I'm goin' to do it."

"Well, well, I won't tempt you any further. I shall have to hedge and save myself."

"That is your best plan. But, see here, I mustn't be seen talkin' to you. So-long, sir."

With that the jockey turned and walked back to where the others were standing, and the old gentleman sauntered on.

"Good, good," the latter chuckled, as he went along, "it is plain that Joe is all right, and I can go in heavy on Lady Lucy. Now I'll see how it is with the rider of Zuleika, if I can find him. There is big money for me in this event, sure as I live, and I will take up everything that offers."

Going leisurely on, the old gentleman presently

stopped at another door, where a coal-black mare was being curried.

"My good man," said he to the hostler, "what flyer is this?"

"This is Zuleika, sir," was the answer.

"Ho! This is the Southerner, is it? Well, well, she is a clean-looking animal, and looks speedy. What do you think her chances are for to-morrow?"

"Well, they was mighty good afore Lady Lucy entered, but now I don't know how it will be. She will have to hump to get there, I'm thinkin'."

"Do you ride her?"

"No, sir."

"Who does?"

"Bob Dennising. He is asleep inside there—No, there he is now."

A very sleepy-looking individual at that moment appeared at the door, and came out yawning and stretching himself.

"You want ter see me?" he asked, having heard his name mentioned.

"Well, not particularly," the old gentleman answered. "I was just looking around a bit, and stopped to inquire the name of this beauty. How do you think she will make it go to-morrow?"

"Oh, we are goin' ter git there or bu'st a strap."

"That is good. That is where I think of putting money. Are you up in weight for the race?"

"No, not quite; I have got to ballast a little."

"You have run her before, I suppose?"

"Oh, yes."

"What do you think of the track?"

"It is fine."

Many more such questions and answers were put and returned, and by moving off a pace at a time the old gentleman gradually drew the jockey away out of the hearing of the hostler.

"I want a word with you in private," he presently came out.

"Well," and Dennising looked around, "what is it?"

"Don't you think that a ballast of fifty dollars in your pocket would cause the black mare to lose the race?"

"Well, hardly," with a drawl and a wink. "Come, old man, you can't feel of me that way. If you think of puttin' money on her, what would you want her to lose for?"

"I said that for the benefit of other ears. I don't want to feel of you, as you put it, but I mean business. My money is going on the other mare, heavy. Now, what do you say?"

"You will have to bid higher."

"Well, make it a hundred, then."

"You are away under the figger, sir. I guess you don't know much about racin' matters. I don't know that I want ter sell out, anyhow."

The old gentleman smiled.

"I may know more about racing matters than you give me credit for," he returned. "Now hear what I have got to say. Here you are going into a race to-morrow in which the chances are against you. You are pretty sure to lose, even if you do your best. You know that as well as I do. Now under these circumstances you may just as well put a little money into your pocket as not. If you will make your defeat a sure thing, I will give you two hundred dollars right here and now."

"Make it two-fifty, and I'll do it."

"All right, two hundred and fifty it is."

"That settles it. Zuleika will lose the race. You mustn't be seen to hand me the money, though. Get out yer rocks on th' sly, and I'll pick 'em up when you are gone. Let 'em drop right on the ground."

"All right, any way you please."

They talked on, continuing their walk, and taking a roll of bills from his vest pocket the old gentleman—rather rascal—counted out the required sum, rolled it up tightly, put a rubber-band around it and let it drop on the ground.

As they were several feet apart, and nothing was passed from hand to hand, the rascally jockey felt perfectly safe in his dishonest game.

A few moments later they parted company, the old man going on and the jockey retracing his steps to the stable, and as he came to the place where the roll of bills had been dropped he stooped, picked it up and thrust it into his pocket.

The old man went right on around the stables, came out at the lower end of the lawn east of the club-house, and then struck out for the village at a livelier pace.

When he reached his destination he entered a hotel of the meaner sort, and at once went up to a room. There, as soon as he had closed the

door, he snatched off his white hair and beard, and he was a younger man by thirty years. He changed his clothes, putting his disguise into a trunk, and when he came forth from the hotel again it was as Alcander Burdick, the owner of the mare Lady Lucy.

CHAPTER III.

NIPPED IN THE BUDDING.

WHEN Eugene Kimberlee and Bethuel Fenton stopped in their walk, and started back, as mentioned, continuing their conversation, they headed for the stables.

Having accepted Beth's offer to ride Zuleika, Kimberlee had to arrange the matter with his jockey in a just and satisfactory manner.

He was well pleased at the change. He had been trying hard to find the man Brown who had once ridden the mare in winning races, and now that he had come upon him in the most unexpected manner he did not mean to lose the chance that offered.

How Dennising would take it he did not know, but he did not greatly care. The fellow had not been keeping himself in the best condition of late, and he had no great faith in him anyhow. Almost any change would have been welcomed.

"You will appear as Brown, of course," Kimberlee observed, when they came near to the stables.

"Yes," agreed Beth. "That will add spice to the race, as I have already brought her first to the wire on two occasions," he added.

"Yes, that is so. It would hardly be dealing on the square not to let your identity as Brown be known."

"That is true."

"Well, here we are at the stables, and I see quite a few persons are already around. Mostly reporters, in quest of pointers, I suppose. Come on, and you shall soon see—"

Kimberlee did not finish the sentence. Instead he stopped short, thrust his arm in front of his companion, and brought him to a stand.

They were just turning into the yard in the rear of the stables.

"What is it?" Beth asked.

"Cast your eyes right over there and you will see."

Beth looked in the direction indicated, and saw a young man and an old one, walking very leisurely along, their backs toward them.

"Those two men?" he asked.

"Exactly; one of them is Dennising."

"So it is. What is he up to?"

"That is just what I want to learn. We will stand right here and watch him. He is not likely to see us, for we are partly hid."

Kimberlee watched his jockey with intense interest. It was possible that he was up to some trick, and if he was he wanted to know it.

Dennising and his companion were not close together, and they got no closer. Their hands did not meet, and in a few moments the old man went on, and the jockey turned and walked back toward the stables.

"I guess there is nothing in it," Kimberlee observed, "unless there is a plot laid. But, why should I suspect anything of that sort?"

"Because you have a suspicion that Dennising is not straight, I suppose," remarked Beth.

"That must be just it. But I may wrong the fellow greatly, and— But ha! I see he picks up something and puts it into his pocket. What is it?"

"It begins to look suspicious," declared Beth. "I have seen such tricks as a jockey selling out a race. I hope it is nothing of that kind."

"I will find out, and it will go hard with the fellow if it is anything of that sort!" declared Kimberlee, grimly.

The two drew back a little more out of sight, and waited until Dennising had entered the stable before they went forward. Then they advanced leisurely.

Kimberlee did not speak to the man who was currying Zuleika, but went right on into the stable, followed by Beth, and they passed silently into a little bunk-room beyond the stalls.

There stood Dennising, his foot on a box, and a goodly sum of money spread out before him on the head of a barrel. He was counting it.

He did not see his employer or Beth until they were upon him, and then he gave a start, looked around—at the same time cramming his money into his pocket, and when he saw who it was his face took on a sickly pallor.

"Hello! What are you doing? Where did you get all that money?" Kimberlee demanded, sharply.

"I—I— It is my own," Dennising stammered, trying hard to regain his composure. "I—I was counting it out, thinkin' I'd make some bets if I got th' chance."

"You did, eh? How did you intend to bet on Lady Lucy?"

"No; on Zuleika, of course."

"Oh, I thought perhaps your interest lay the other way. Seeing you have so much money in a lump gave me the impression that perhaps you had been selling out."

"Me! I ain't that kind of a rooster. No, sir. I don't sell out no races, I don't. When I straddle a hoss I mean to get there if I can, every time. No, sir. This money is all mine, an' I'm givin' it to ye straight."

"All right, all right; but who was that old gentleman I saw you talking to just now? And what was it that be dropped on the ground, and which you picked up and put into your pocket when you left him?"

The rascally jockey's face had grown pale again.

Kimberlee had every reason to suspect him of having accepted a bribe, and he meant to know the truth of the matter.

"That was only a friend o' mine," the jockey answered, after a little hesitation. "I was givin' him a friendly tip, that was all."

"And what was that tip?"

"Why, I was tellin' him to put his spondulix on Zuleika, for I intended to get there if it was in th' wood."

"Well, and what was it he dropped, and you afterward picked up?"

"He dropped me a fiver for th' information."

"Can you show me that bill?"

Kimberlee had noticed at a glance that the money on the barrel consisted mostly of tens.

"Of course I kin," Dennising growled, "but I won't. It is mighty mean of you to think such a thing of me," with an injured air.

"I suppose it is, but you must admit that the circumstances are bad, and if you are innocent you ought to be only too glad to set yourself right. Show me that bill, and it will be something in your favor."

The jockey brought out his money, muttering something about having put the bill in with the rest of it, but when he had run through it there was not a five to be found. He was in a bad situation, and knew that he was.

"I have lost it," he declared, looking about the floor near the barrel. "I had it, but it is gone."

"No matter," said Kimberlee, carelessly, "we will go and find your old friend and you can soon prove your statement."

"I don't think we can find him now. He did not say which way he was goin'. If you ain't willin' ter take my word for it we had better part company, and you kin hunt up somebody else ter ride your hoss. I am not used ter sich dealin's, that I kin tell ye, an' I don't mean ter stand it."

Kimberlee's hand came out of his pocket with a beautiful little derringer in its grasp.

"Dennising," he said sternly. "I want you to make a clean breast of this matter to me, and you had better not lose any time in doing it."

"There is nothin' ter make a clean breast of," the discomfited jockey tried to insist. "What I have told you is straight."

"Don't try to make it worse by lying about it. Come, now, own right up, or I will put you under arrest."

"Will you let me down easy?"

"Ha! I was sure of it. Yes, I will be more lenient with you than you deserve. I will allow you to slink away like the knave that you are."

"But, who will ride for ye?"

"That need not concern you. It will be an honest man, at any rate. Come, let me know all about this matter, and who it was that bribed you."

"Th' last I can't tell you, because I don't know. He was a old gent, with white hair and beard. I never seen him afore. He came nosin' around here, askin' questions, an' I walked along with him a little ways, an' suddenly he whipped out his money an' he says, says he, I'll give you two hundred an' fifty dollars if you will lose that race to-morrow. 'Done,' says I; 'let th' money drop.' He let it drop, and I picked it up, an' that is all there was of it."

"You deserve to be shot," Kimberlee grated, almost trembling in his indignation and disgust. "So you would have sold me out, would you? In fact, you did sell me out."

"I'll tell ye how it was. You see there ain't no show fer Zuleika, with Lady Lucy in th' field, an' I thought I might jest as well scoop

in his money as not. It was a sure thing for him, and if he was fool enough ter pay me—"

"Get out of here, before I kick you out!" cried Kimberlee, hotly. "Don't let me ever see your face again, you cur!"

"All right, only let me get what belongs to me."

"Well, pack up, mighty quick. You have ridden your last race on any decent track, be sure of that. Mr. Brown here will ride to-morrow, and we'll see whether Zuleika will have to lose or not."

"Brown!" the disgraced jockey exclaimed.

"Yes, Brown, the man who has thus far got the best speed out of the mare. But, get out of here, for I don't want to see you around."

"All right, I'm goin'. This is your work, Brown, I believe, and I will fix you fer it, see if I don't. I'll show you a thing or two, an'—"

He did not finish. He had gathered up what belonged to him, and Kimberlee laid hold of him and run him out into the yard and drove him away from the stable.

That part of it was seen by many persons, and the news spread rapidly.

"I am glad to be rid of him," Kimberlee declared, when he returned to where Beth was. "Now will you take charge of everything here?"

"Yes. Is your men out there to be trusted?"

"Yes, I think so."

"Very well, but to be on the safe side I want two of my own here. Will you go and see if you can get hold of Webb Holder and Doc Benson?" and he told who they were and where they would most likely be found.

Kimberlee went off in search of them, and within an hour they were on hand, and, after a conference with Beth, in which he told them who he was, they took full possession of the stable, although the groom was still retained.

"You need have no fears concerning the safety of Zuleika," assured Beth, as he and Kimberlee walked away; "those men will defend her with their lives. I know them to be true blue."

"I trust you and them fully. Well, meet me this afternoon, and I will give you what I promised."

So they parted, and in an hour the disgraced jockey, Bob Dennising, was a proscript, and his career on the turf was at an end. It was made known, too, that Brown, the successful rider of Zuleika, had been found, and would ride in the morrow's race.

This was most unwelcome news to Alcander Burdick.

CHAPTER IV.

THE USUAL FRIENDLY TIPS.

ALCANDER BURDICK was a man about thirty years of age.

He might have been rather good-looking, had it not been that his face bore the unmistakable stamp of dissipation. He was above the medium in height, but it cannot be added that he was of good physical proportions. He was thin, and, to quote a homely but expressive saying, "did not quite fill his clothes."

In the matter of dress he was a little overdone. He wore a very "horsey" hat of wine-colored felt, and a silk-velvet suit with very elaborate binding. A heavy gold chain crossed his vest, and a big diamond adorned his bosom. He terminated in a pair of patent-leather gaiters, and carried in his hand a ratan cane with a gold head.

Such was his appearance when he came out of the little, out-of-the-way hotel in the town of Hunterford, after laying off his disguise, as mentioned in a preceding chapter.

From there he went around to a hotel of a more pretentious sort, and, when the stages and hacks began making their trips to the Cedar Park Course, he was among the first passengers to ride over.

Arriving there, he went directly to the Pansy Club House.

Here he was heartily welcomed by many other gentlemen of horsey predilections, and was soon the center of an admiring group. That he was the owner of Lady Lucy was enough to insure his standing, without anything else.

Half an hour later this dude of the track was inquiring for one Lambert Murtagh, a bookmaker. Had any one seen Murtagh? Had any one seen the bookmaker? It seemed that no one had, recently, but while Burdick was still making inquiries, Murtagh was seen coming from the direction of the stables.

"There he comes, now," some one said, and Burdick went forward to meet him.

When they met, and had exchanged the greetings of the morning, Burdick asked:

"Have you heard the latest?"

"About Dennising?" Murtagh queried.

"Yes; and that Brown, the mysterious, is to take his place."

"Yes, I have heard all about it, and I have been around to see about it. Who can the buyer-up have been?"

"I give it up. Some one who wanted to put his money on a sure thing, of course. Now what odds are you going to post to-morrow?"

"Just what I am thinking about. I think your mare has a sure thing of it yet, but with Brown in the saddle the chances of Zuleika are increased. I did intend to post four to one against Zuleika, but I think I will make it three to one, now. It will still be five to one against Faustina. As for the others, I guess I will bunch them at about eight to one. It will be a good field, no doubt, and I can make myself more than whole in the possible event of Lady Lucy's losing the race."

"Then you think Lady Lucy has a sure thing of it yet, do you?"

"That is what I said, and that is what I mean. It is not likely that Zuleika will beat her best record, and you know Lady Lucy's is far ahead of that."

"Yes, that is so. I intend to do some tall betting, and I want to have my mind well settled on a pretty sure thing."

"Well, you needn't be afraid of losing."

"By the way, is there anything worth venturing a few dollars on to-day?"

"Yes, there is. I can give you a straight tip on a good thing. Dandelion is in, with lighter weight than she carried last year at any race, and you can put your loose change on her at almost any odds and be sure of winning. Don't let this out. I shall put her well down on my list, so as not to draw too much attention to her, and I expect to reap a rich harvest on five to one against King, the favorite."

"Thanks, I will profit by that."

"Besides, Tomson is to ride Dandelion. Too bad we could not get such a snap for to-morrow, but Lady Lucy is too well known. Mind not to let this out, or it will be money out of your purse and mine."

"Oh, I am mum about it."

They were walking back toward the clubhouse, and when they reached the steps of the veranda, their conversation ended and they parted.

In a few moments Burdick was in conversation with another man.

This was Templeton Downdey, the owner of Faustina.

"Well, how do you feel about the race for to-morrow?" Burdick asked, after the usual marks of greeting had been exchanged.

"I feel that I have lost a good thing by your entering Lady Lucy," was the reply. "I intended to put up every dollar I am worth on the event, for I feel sure that Faustina can outrun Zuleika in the two miles. Now Lady Lucy will draw all the money, and I shall not be able to get any heavy takers. I have no hope of winning against Lady Lucy, but you can safely bet your dollars on Faustina for a place."

"Is that a straight tip?"

"It is, and you can rely upon it. Zuleika has never run a two-mile race, for such races are going out of date, as you know; and she has not the bottom to carry her through. I got this from Dennising, the bounced jockey. On the other hand, Faustina is good for even a longer distance, and it will be between her and Lady Lucy."

"I believe you are right. I had not thought of that."

"You will learn all the tricks when you are older in the harness, my boy. From what Dennising said, and I think it is straight, I would not be surprised to see some of the others come in ahead of Zuleika."

"Is it possible! Well, much obliged for the tip. Are you putting up any money on the races to-day?"

"I may venture some on King. Why do you ask?"

"Don't do it. Put your money on Dandelion, on the quiet. This is straight."

"Where did you get it?"

"Well, I wouldn't tell another, but I got it from Murtagh. Don't let it out. We can use all these good things among ourselves."

"Well, if Murtagh said so it must be straight, but I don't understand it. How is he going to book King?"

"Five to one against."

"That settles it, then. He means to draw his big blood there. I'm glad you put me on to it, or I might have been out of pocket."

"Oh, you are welcome to it. But, can you

tell me where I can find that fellow Dennising? I would like to see him."

"He will be around the betting ring when the place opens. He has a handful of money, and is itching to put it up."

After some further talk they parted, and Burdick set out to find the disgraced jockey.

He found him not far from the entrance to the betting ring, under the grand stand, but did not speak to him immediately. He wanted it to seem a chance meeting.

The jockey had just been stopped by some friends, and Burdick was able to hear his version of his fall from grace—as it were.

"You see Kimberlee has been lookin' high an' low for that fellow Brown," he said, "an' this mornin' he found him. Then of course he wanted to get rid of me. What a white man would have done would 'a' been to pay me and let Brown ride the race, but he didn't do that. He happened to come inter th' stable when I was countin' out some money that I wanted to put up, an' he 'cused me of sellin' him out. There was no use kickin', when he was bound to fire me anyhow, so I had to take it. That's th' long and short of it all."

Burdick had to smile. The story was so "thin" that any one could see through it, and no jockey would have submitted tamely to the disgrace unless guilty.

When Dennising moved off alone, presently, Burdick met him.

"Ha, is that you, Dennising?" he asked, pretending to see him for the first time, and merely by chance.

"Yes, sir," was the acknowledgment.

"I wanted to see you a moment. I have heard about your misfortune, and it is too bad; but it serves you right. We cannot let the honor of the track suffer, you are aware. Now, that old gentleman who was so imprudent as to approach you is a friend of mine, and although he does not know that I know what he did, I want to make him whole in the matter. You will please turn that bribe-money over to me, and I will see that he gets it."

The jockey laughed.

"Do you think I am a fool?" he demanded. "In the first place I did not take any bribe, and nobody can prove that I did; and in the next place, supposin' that I had taken it, do you think I would give up th' money? Hardly. If your friend the old gentleman wants to see me, tell him come on. What can he prove? What little money I have is my own."

Dennising went on then and repeated his version of the affair, telling the story in substantially the same form as Burdick had heard him tell it to the others.

"Well, nobody is going to press you," said Burdick, as he turned away, "but you know that you are guilty, and so do I. But, if my old friend is out his two-fifty it is his own fault, and it will teach him a lesson."

"How do you know it was two-fifty?" the jockey asked.

That was a keen cut, but as Burdick was already moving off he did not pay any attention to it, and Dennising looked after him with a smile and with one eye half shut in a most knowing manner.

"He must think I am made o' putty," the fellow commented. "I'd like ter see myself handin' that money over to him. He thinks he is cute, but that old gentleman is a fake. I recognize his voice now, though I didn't think o' such a thing afore. Ha! I wonder if I couldn't work him on that racket? But, no, he would defy me, an' I couldn't prove it ag'in him."

There was an eager look in the fellow's eyes as he thought it over, however, and it was not at all unlikely that he would try the blackmail scheme if chance offered.

As for Burdick, he went off in anger.

"Confound my stupidness!" he muttered to himself, "wby did I not let well-enough alone? Here I am out two hundred and fifty dollars for nothing. It was well that I went in disguise. But I would not ha' thought of going in any other way. Perhaps it is worth the money to know that Trippers can't be bought, though, and there is no use in any one trying to bribe him to lose the race to Lady Lucy. I offered him more than any one else would be likely to. No, Trippers is all right. And now I must go over and see Mr. Fenterton again. Now that I have put him in the hole I threatened to put him in, perhaps he will come to terms if I promise to help him out again."

With this train of thought in mind, he returned to the club-house, and after talking with Templeton Downdey and others for a little time, ordered a horse and buggy brought around to the door.

The rig was soon ready for him, and he, taking it, went out of the grounds and drove away toward the west along the main road.

There were observing eyes that watched him. These were those of Bethuel Fenterton and Eugene Kimberlee.

"He is going out to see father, as sure as you live," guessed Beth. "He will get there ahead of our messenger, Kimberlee."

"That's so. What mischief is he up to?"

"I don't know. But, no matter what it is, I can foresee the reception he will get. No need to trouble our heads about him."

CHAPTER V.

SOMETHING OF A SURPRISE.

ALGERNON FENTERTON was a man who was moving on toward sixty years of age.

He was not now the man he had been. He was breaking down, it was said of him, but if that was true of him physically it was not true of him mentally. His mind was as bright as it had ever been.

He had at one time been quite rich, but misfortune had overtaken him, and he had never regained what he had lost. Only for his friend, Leonard Burdick, he would have been beggared, but the timely loan of a hundred and fifty thousand dollars saved him. Mention has been made of this transaction.

After the loan, prosperity smiled upon him for a time, and half of it was paid back and the interest kept up. The interest on the remaining half had always been paid promptly, as by verbal agreement it was merely a nominal sum, but Mr. Fenterton had not been able to return the principal.

While his friend lived, it was all right, but at his death the son, Alcander, came into possession, and he foreclosed at once; and catching Mr. Fenterton at a bad financial period, left him little of his once large estate. But the mortgage was fully satisfied, and the old homestead remained, although many of its broad acres went to join the Burdick property.

The loss that grieved Mr. Fenterton most was that of his horses. Of them, the particular one was Lady Lucy. It had been an even thing in his mind whether they or the homestead should be sacrificed, but his wife pleading for the homestead, he had not long remained undecided. The stables were emptied, but the animals did not bring anywhere near their value, and Lady Lucy went to young Burdick at a trifling figure.

On this morning of the opening day of the races, Mr. Fenterton was sitting in his library, in a sad and thoughtful mood. This was the time he had looked forward to with eager expectation, when his mare, Lady Lucy, would be eligible to enter for the Hippogriff Handicap, and now the animal was in other hands.

Little wonder that he was melancholy.

In another room were his wife, daughter, and Eudora Cranston, a young lady who was paying Gracienna a visit. The two girls were singing merrily, and their good spirits seemed only to add to the heaviness of his.

Mr. Fenterton was a well-preserved woman of fifty, with a kindly face and a gentle heart. Gracienna took after her in those respects, and was pretty, with a most winning manner. Their visitor—who, by the way, was as good as engaged to Beth, was not lacking in anything that goes to make a woman lovely and lovable.

Some time later, when Mrs. Fenterton and Gracienna were in another part of the house, and Miss Cranston had gone into the library to talk with Mr. Fenterton for a little while, there came a rap at the door.

Mr. Fenterton was about to get up to answer the summons, but Miss Cranston was too quick for him, and telling him to keep his seat, went to the door for him.

The caller was Alcander Burdick.

"Is Mr. Fenterton in?" he asked.

"Yes," was the answer, and, at the same time the young lady threw open the door, and indicated that Mr. Fenterton was in the library.

Young Burdick bowed, and passed in.

The instant he entered the door of the library though, Mr. Fenterton was upon his feet with the exclamation:

"You!"

"Yes, I," coolly answered Burdick, as he closed the door after him.

This much Miss Cranston heard, but no more, for she went off immediately to rejoin Mrs. Fenterton and Gracienna.

"I have come to see you on a little matter of business," Burdick went on, "and to do you a good turn if you will allow me to do it."

"I do not want to have anything to do with

you," declared Mr. Fenterton, in tones of sternness. "There is the door; be off with you as soon as you can."

"Just one word, Mr. Fenterton," the young man requested, at the same time replacing his hand on the knob of the door in order to beat a hasty retreat if necessary; "I am here with good intent, I assure you."

"There is not a spark of good in you. But, say what you have to say, and say it quickly."

So Mr. Fenterton returned.

"I can put you in the way of making money at the races to-day, Mr. Fenterton," the young man set forth, "and I can give you a tip that will bring you a fortune at the great race tomorrow."

"Dast your impudence!" Mr. Fenterton thundered. "What do you suppose I have to risk, after the way you have robbed me?"

"Robbed is hardly the word, Mr. Fenterton, since I only collected what was my own of right. But let that pass. Do you want the information I can give?"

"No, I don't. I do not want to have anything to do with you."

"I will do more, Mr. Fenterton. Give me your daughter's hand in marriage, and I will make you a present of the seventy-five thousand I have collected, and you can almost double it at the races. There is no doubt about it."

"And you will return the mare, too, of course."

This was said in a tone of cold sarcasm.

"Well, hardly that, Mr. Fenterton, if I make the amount good in other ways. I could not think of parting with her. And, why would it be necessary, since by the marriage the whole thing would be right in the family? I—"

"Go! Get right out!" Mr. Fenterton ordered. "I do not want to hear another word out of you. I would not accept a favor at your hands under any circumstances, and as for giving you my daughter, I had rather see her dead at my feet. Go! I say, before I kick you out as I did once before."

Burdick saw that delay was dangerous, and beat a hasty retreat.

"All right, all right, Mr. Fenterton," he said; "but you are standing in your own light, and you will find it out so, too."

He went out, shutting the hall door after him with a bang, and jumping into his buggy, applied the whip to his horse and was off like the wind.

Mr. Fenterton was left pacing the floor of the library in a heat of anger.

"The infernal cur!" he grated. "I would like to wring his neck for him. It is a wonder that his father can rest in his grave, with such a son as that alive. He is a disgrace to the family name. By heavens! it will not be safe for him to darken my door again!"

"Who was it, and what is the trouble?" inquired Mrs. Fenterton, coming in.

"Who was it, indeed! Who but that cur of a Burdick. I ought to have kicked him clear to the gate, and I'm sorry that I didn't do it, too."

"There, there, Algernon, do not take on so," the good woman tried to pacify; "he has done his worst, and we need not notice him. Do not be so excited, I beg."

"That is all very well, Martha dear," answered Mr. Fenterton, laying his hand gently on his wife's shoulder, "but I will stand no more of his insults. It is an insult for him to ask for our daughter."

"Well, well, let it pass. It is not likely that he will trouble you again. If he has— Ha! who is that?"

There was another knock at the door.

"It must be Squire Heatherly, I think. I have sent for him to come over and see me. Just see who it is, please."

Mrs. Fenterton went to the door, and the hearty voice of the squire was heard immediately.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Fenterton," he cried, "good-morning. How do you do? You look as charming as you can. What is the trouble with that husband of yours, that he has sent for me, eh?"

This was said in his bluff, good-natured way.

Mrs. Fenterton answered pleasantly, showed him into the library, and retired to leave them alone.

After their hearty greeting the squire, taking a seat, asked:

"Well, Alg, friend, what is it?"

The squire was a fat, red-faced man, rather short in stature, and his jolly laugh was like the roar of old ocean.

Mr. Fenterton stated his case in as few words as possible. The sum of it was that he wanted to raise money to place on the mare Lady Lucy in

the coming race, and wanted the 'squire to lend it to him, taking a mortgage on his remaining property as security.

"Algy, I won't do it," was the flat answer, when Mr. Heatherly had heard him to the end. "I won't see you risk your last dollars in that way. I admit that Burdick has treated you shamefully, and that the mare is rightfully yours, since she was forced from you as it were, but that is no reason why you should make a mad move. She might lose the race."

"Impossible!"

"Yes, I know you think so, but I won't help you in that way. I'll lend you the sum to brace up your business, however, if you want it."

"Your answer is what I feared it would be," said Mr. Fenterton, sadly, "and I must try elsewhere. I am bound to have the money, and to risk it on the race. I will back the mare, even though she is mine no longer. Why, 'squire, it will be the making of me, again."

"May be so, may be so, but I won't have anything to do with it, and I advise you to keep out. Not that I am not your friend, for I am; I would be glad for the chance to get a hold upon this fine old homestead, were it not yours. But as it is— No, no, I won't do it. I would—"

He was interrupted by another knock at the door.

Mr. Fenterton answered it, and came back with two letters and a package in his hands. A messenger on horseback had left them.

The package and one of the letters were addressed to him, and the other letter was for Miss Cranston.

"You will pardon me if I examine these?" Mr. Fenterton asked, as he laid Miss Cranston's note on the table, and looked with curiosity at the package he had received; "the messenger said they are important."

"Certainly," granted the 'squire; "go right ahead."

Mr. Fenterton opened the package, which was wrapped with care, and to his almost paralyzing surprise a great bundle of bank notes was brought out. What did it mean? Who had sent the money? What was it for? He looked from the money to his friend and from his friend to the money, as though unable to speak.

"No doubt the letter explains it," the 'squire suggested.

"I guess this is a note," Mr. Fenterton managed to say, as he drew a little slip of paper from under the string with which the money was bound. "Yes, it is," he affirmed, as he opened it; and he read aloud:

"MR. FENTERTON:—

"Accept this money as a loan from a friend. Place it on the races to-morrow, and may good luck attend the venture. If you win, you may repay it; if not, then no matter. A FRIEND."

The package of money bore the mark "\$5,000," in blue pencil, and the two men could only sit and look at it for some time, in silent wonder.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INTEREST INCREASES.

'SQUIRE HEATHERLY was the first to break the silence, and he did so by breaking out into his sonorous laugh, which we have likened to the roar of old ocean.

This so startled Mr. Fenterton that he dropped the package of money to the floor and sprung half out of his chair.

"Ho, ho, ho, ho!" Mr. Heatherly roared; "this is the best joke I ever heard of! I might say it is the richest. Ha, ha, ha! Why, somebody is bound that you shall bet on Lady Lucy in spite of me, Algy, my boy."

"So it seems," agreed Mr. Fenterton, picking up the money. "But, who can this friend be? It is a mystery to me. I cannot understand it at all."

"And you never will, either, if you don't read the letter," the 'squire reminded. "See whom the letter is from."

"That is so, 'squire, that is so; I am so upset that I hardly know what I am doing. What did I do with it?"

"There it is, right there."

"So it is. Well, we'll see what it has to say."

Mr. Fenterton took up the letter, opened it and drew out the sheet it contained, and, as he glanced at it, he exclaimed:

"Why, it is from Beth!"

"Well, what does he say? Come, I am as interested as you are."

Mr. Fenterton glanced over it for a moment, then read aloud:

"DEAR FATHER:—

"The package of money which accompanies this is from a friend of yours. He will not allow me to

reveal his name. He wants you to use it as your own and bet on the Hippogriff Handicap to-morrow. But you must not bet on Lady Lucy, for she will not win the race. Put every dollar of it on Zuleika. I know—"

"The Boy is crazy! He is stark, staring mad!" Mr. Fenterton stopped short to exclaim.

"Go on and read the rest of it," urged the 'squire; "we will comment when you are done."

Mr. Fenterton resumed:—

"I know what I am writing about, father, so do not trust your own judgement in the matter, which would lead you to put the money on Lady Lucy. I shall ride Zuleika, but you must not let this become known. I have parted with my beard, and will be known as 'Brown.' No one guesses who I am. Be careful that you do not let the secret out. I shall not be home to-night, but am all right."

"Your son, BETH."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" Mr. Heatherly exclaimed.

"I would not have read this aloud before you, 'squire, had I any doubt about trusting you with a secret, but I had not, and so you have heard it. Now what do you think about it? Don't you think the boy is mad? Do you imagine that black mare from the South can outrun Lady Lucy?"

"The manner of the lad's note seems to be confident enough," was the answer, "and certainly the money speaks for itself. My advice is, though I am not much of a turf man, to follow the directions and ask no questions."

"I suppose I shall have to do so, though it is in opposition to my judgment. Well, 'squire, it seems that I shall not need the loan asked for. I do not hold any ill-will against you for not granting it, for that was no more than I expected."

"Then you were not disappointed, were you? No, friend Algy, I would not lend you the money for such a purpose, when you proposed to stake the very house over your head upon the result of a race. And from the nature of this communication from your son, it looks as though you would have lost."

"That is the way it looks. Well, I will follow the boy's advice, for I freely admit that he knows more about horses than I do, and I will see how I come out. You may be sure that I shall bleed Mr. Upstart Burdick if I can."

"I do not blame you for that. It would serve him right. He has not used you half square. If the mare should be beat it will be just like him to want to sell her off, and you may get some one to buy her in for you."

"That is so, but then, you know, her value will be less than it is now."

"No matter, her speed won't be any slower."

"That is true."

Just then there was a tap at the door, and Gracienna entered.

"Pardon the intrusion," she apologized; "I want to get a book which Eudora left here."

Gracienna made the apology to her father, but at the same time made a bow the 'squire, and when she had exchanged a few words with him she took up the book she had come for and started to leave the room.

"Oh, hold on," said Mr. Fenterton, suddenly, "here is a letter for Eudora. I came near forgetting it."

He took the letter from the table and handed it to her.

"Where did it come from?" Gracienna asked.

"A messenger brought it a few minutes ago, with one for me."

"Oh. The reason I asked was because I know it is not yet mail time."

Gracienna took the letter and left the room, and we, leaving the two old gentlemen to continue their talk, will follow her and learn what the letter brought.

"What! A letter for me?" Miss Cranston cried, when Gracienna gave it to her; "I wonder whom it can be from."

"You need not pretend that you do not know the writing," responded her friend, playfully.

"Really, I scarcely glanced at it," declared the blushing girl.

"Then you had better do so."

"Why, I do believe it is from Beth. What can he have to say to me?"

"There is one way to find out, 'Dora, dear."

"By opening and reading it, eh? I suppose you are right. We will enjoy it together, Gracie."

"It may be something not intended for other eyes than yours."

"It is nothing that you may not see, I am sure. Come, let's sit down here and I will open it immediately."

The two girls sat down, and Eudora tore

open the envelope and drew forth the sheet it contained. She read it over to herself first, laughing merrily as she ended it, and asked:

"Shall I read it aloud to you, or do you prefer to read it yourself?"

"You may read it aloud if you desire me to know what he says," Gracienna answered.

Eudora read as follows:

"DEAR DORA:—Business prevents my returning home to-day, and I offer my humble apology. Of course you and Gracie will attend the races to-morrow. I hope to see you there, though I may not get a chance to speak to you, as I am to ride. If that dainty purse of yours must come open, as I know it will in the excitement, do not put your pin-money on Lady Lucy. If you do you will lose. I shall ride Zuleika, and I expect to win the race. My colors are to be red and gold. I shall be known as 'Brown,' and you must not reveal my identity to any one. As long as I am confident of winning I will carry my handkerchief in my hand."

"Sincerely, BETH."

"Shall you attend the race?" Gracienna asked when Eudora had done reading the missive.

"Shall I! I would not miss it for anything! Of course you will go, too."

"Indeed, yes. We shall have a splendid time."

"And I do hope Beth will win. Not that I want to see Lady Lucy beaten, but I do want to see that hateful Downdey defeated. I would give anything if his horse could come in the very last of all."

"What is the name of his horse?"

"Faustina. She is— Oh! goodness me! There comes Downdey himself, this very minute!"

The girls were seated near a window, and Eudora was the first to see the horse and buggy which just then drew up to the gate. It was Templeton Downdey.

"Whom can he want to see?" queried Gracienna.

"Me, I suppose," answered Eudora. "I wish he were at the bottom of the sea. The hateful thing, he has the impudence to want me to marry him."

Gracienna laughed merrily.

"Why, he is forty years old if he is a day," she declared.

"Nearer fifty, I should think," added Eudora. Templeton Downdey tied his horse and came in to the house, giving a loud rap on the door.

Mrs. Fenterton answered it.

"Good-morning," Downdey greeted. "I hope you are well, Mrs. Fenterton. How is Mr. Fenterton? And is Miss Cranston here? I have called to see her, if you please."

Mrs. Fenterton responded to the questions, told him that Miss Cranston was there, and asked him to come in, conducting him to the sitting-room where the girls were to be found.

Downdey bowed elaborately as he entered, offered the good wishes of the day to both, and said:

"Miss Cranston, I have called to see you for a moment, if I may have the very great honor and pleasure."

Mrs. Fenterton had already withdrawn, as soon as she had shown Downdey in, and now Gracienna rose to go out.

"Do not go," said Eudora; "I am sure Mr. Downdey has nothing to say that you may not hear. Sit down again."

"Of course not, of course not, Miss Fenterton; do not think of leaving the room," exclaimed Downdey, although the expression of his face was one of disappointment and disgust. "My business is nothing secret, I assure you. Keep your seat, I beg of you, for my proposition will interest you as well as Miss Cranston."

"I have called, Miss Cranston, to give you tickets of admission to the grand stand for tomorrow's races, for yourself and friends, and I hope you will do me the honor to accept them. I am sure you will be pleased with the races, and well repaid for the trouble of attending. It is needless to say that Lady Lucy will certainly win the great handicap, and I am certain that my Faustina will come in second. I mention this by the way."

"But what about Zuleika?" Eudora asked, with mischief in her eyes.

"Bound to lose," Downdey promptly answered. "She has no chance of winning. It is to be a two-mile race, you know, and she can never hold out. Hasn't the bottom, you know. It is not so with Lady Lucy and Faustina. They will come in with colors flying, though of course I have no thought that Faustina will win."

"We understand that Zuleika has a good record, though."

"Yes, but only in mile heats. But, will you do me the honor to accept these passes?"

"We are sorry," answered Eudora, "but we

have made other arrangements, so you had better give them to some one else."

"Well, give them to some of your friends."

"No, thank you, Mr. Downdey, but I prefer not to accept them."

Downdey was far from pleased, but he put the tickets back into his pocket with as good grace as he could, and after some further conversation took his leave.

Squire Heatherly was going about the same time, and he, Downdey and Mr. Fenterton had quite a horsey debate at the gate. It was a surprise to Downdey to find that Mr. Fenterton and the Squire were inclined to think that Zuleika would win the race.

CHAPTER VII.

SOME EXTRA HEAVY BETTING.

THE races of the opening day came off according to programme, and everybody was delighted—except of course the losers, and their name was legion.

In the principal race, the horse King had been the prime favorite, and when the bookmakers announced odds of five to one against, everybody was eager for the bait.

It was the best thing that had been offered in some time, the old turf devotees declared, and most of them went in heavy. There were some wary ones, however, who scented the "mice," and who, after careful study, "caught on" to the situation, and laid their money on Dandelion.

Just before the race came off this "tip" began to circulate, and many who had bet on King were frantic to "hedge" and save themselves. Others laughed at the idea, and let their money stand as it was.

Dandelion won the race by almost a length, amid great excitement and applause from the crowd.

Some of the bettors were very bitter against the rider of King, accusing him of having sold the race, but this was denied, and as King had added half a minute to his best time, it was not credited. The race, so far as could be known, had been a perfectly fair and honest one, although the weight assigned to Dandelion was claimed to be lighter than it should have been.

In the evening the Pansy Club House was crowded.

But few members of the Hippogriff Association were absent, and they were hardly missed, there being so many strangers present.

It was about nine o'clock when Eugene Kimberlee and Beth Fenterton entered.

Kimberlee was saluted at once by a score or more of those present, and he soon joined a group, introducing Beth as Mr. Brown.

"Mr. Brown is not a professional jockey," he explained, "but a gentleman of means."

This was an item of news that was soon handed around, and Beth attracted a good deal of attention.

After a little time he and Kimberlee found themselves seated at a table with a group consisting of Alcander Burdick, Templeton Downdey, Lambert Murtagh and others, with wine and cigars before them.

No need to mention that the races of the morrow was the subject of the conversation.

"By the way, Mr. Brown," observed Templeton Downdey, presently, "I suppose you will push hard for place to-morrow?"

"For first place, yes," the young stranger calmly answered.

This raised a laugh.

"Why, you haven't the ghost of a chance against Lady Lucy," Downdey declared. "It is madness for you to think so."

"Opinions differ in this, as in other things," was the cool rejoinder.

"But, don't you know that you can't win? Do you know what Lady Lucy's record is?"

"Oh, yes, I know all about that. I feel confident that Zuleika will outrun her, though."

"Have you any money to back that opinion?" asked Alcander Burdick.

"Yes, a little, if it is necessary," Beth answered.

"Hold on, Burdick," cried Downdey, "I have first hold here. I want to put up a little wager with Mr. Brown that Faustina will come to the wire ahead of Zuleika. Do you want to risk anything on that, Mr. Brown, at two to one?"

"I do not mind putting up a thousand dollars on those money," answered Beth, as he drew out some terms, "but I am looking for something better."

"Can't you make it five thousand?"

"No, only what I have named—one thousand to your two."

"Very well, so be it."

Both counted out their money, and, after a

plain and distinct understanding, the amounts were turned over to a committee of the Association, whose business it was to take charge of stakes so wagered between gentlemen in the club-house, when requested to do so.

"Now," spoke up young Burdick, when that matter had been arranged, "as you are looking for something better than two to one, Mr. Brown, have you anything to risk at three to one between Lady Lucy and Zuleika?"

"Yes, I am ready to take you up on those terms," was the calm answer.

"Well, how much dare you venture?"

"It is not what I dare venture," Beth answered, "but it is the limit that I can venture. I have twenty-four thousand dollars that I will put up on the terms you have named."

Burdick turned pale, and the eyes of Templeton Downdey, Lambert Murtagh, and the others present bulged out like turnips. The young stranger's cool offer of such a sum fairly took away their breath.

"You do not mean it!" Burdick gasped.

"Of course I mean it," Beth assured. "Is it too much for you? If so, how do you want it divided?"

"I can cover ten thousand of it, but not more to-night."

"Very well, let it be ten thousand, then—ten to thirty," and Beth counted out the money, coolly, calmly.

The attention of the whole room was upon him now, and almost every voice was hushed.

Burdick counted out what money he had on his person, and then called upon the treasurer of the association to see if he had enough to his credit in the club-house safe to make up the sum.

The money was forthcoming, though it cut Burdick's deposit pretty low, and the matter was settled.

"I have still fourteen thousand left in hand," Beth announced, "and I am willing to risk it all, if any one else desires to cover it at the same terms."

"I am your man, sir," announced Templeton Downdey.

"Three to one?"

"Yes, sir. If you are determined to throw your money away, I may as well have ten thousand of it."

"You will be welcome to it, if you win it," said Beth, as he proceeded to count out the sum required.

Kimberlee was a quiet observer of all.

Downdey procured the money, and the wager was laid in due form.

It was a long time since the Pansy Club House had seen anything of the kind on such a scale, and on what was looked upon as such a forlorn hope.

"My young friend," spoke up Lambert Murtagh, then, "if you want to put up the rest of your pile, I will cover it for you. Like Mr. Downdey, I may as well have some of it as not."

"It is yours, sir, if you win it," answered Beth. "Four thousand of it, and it calls for twelve to cover."

"Here is the sum," and Murtagh went down into his pocket and drew out a great fistful of bills and counted it out.

That bet, like the others, was soon arranged, and Beth had disposed of the sum which Kimberlee had put into his hands for the purpose.

"You will pardon me, Mr. Brown," observed Kimberlee, now, "but you seem to have more confidence in winning the race than I, the owner of Zuleika, have dared to express. I take it that you have staked your pile."

"If I lose my bets I shall be worse than beggared," was the calm answer.

"You have nerve, and your confidence must be well founded. If you dare risk all on the race, surely I ought not to hold back with a few thousand. Gentlemen, I have twenty-five thousand that I am willing to put up."

"See here," cried Alcander Burdick, "is there anything crooked in this? It looks to me as though there is."

"There is nothing crooked so far as our side is concerned," answered Kimberlee. "You know me, or ought to, and I can vouch for Mr. Brown."

"If you want to declare the bets off," added Beth, "now is your chance to do it. We want no trouble after the race has been run. If I lose, well and good. If I win, then I expect to take the money."

"Oh, no," exclaimed Burdick and Downdey together, "the bets stand, and we will stand by them, win or lose. We shall take care that there is no funny work going on, however."

"That is your right."

"Well, does anybody take my money?" in-

terrogated Kimberlee. "Mr. Burdick, you ought to be able to cover it at three to one easily."

"By Harry, but I would do it, if I had the means at hand," Burdick exclaimed. "It is so much money thrown away not to do it."

"I will accept your note at sight," said Kimberlee.

"Done. Bring me pen and ink, somebody."

The club-house was in a fever of excitement. This was going beyond anything it had ever witnessed. Five-thousand dollar bets had been about the highest that had ever been laid on any single race heretofore, and they had been looked upon as enormous. Such betting as this took away the breath of the veterans.

Pen and ink were soon provided, and Burdick, with trembling hand, wrote out a note at sight for the immense sum of seventy-five thousand dollars, passing it over to the stake-holder, and the transaction was done.

"Say, my friend," inquired an outsider, addressing Beth, "what reason have you to be so confident that Zuleika will win to-morrow?"

"I have confidence in the mare, and am merely backing my judgement," was the answer.

Nothing more could be asked. That covered the whole ground.

"Now would anybody like to lay a few dollars for place between Zuleika and Faustina?" Kimberlee asked.

"Ha! Trying to hedge already?" cried Murtagh.

"No, not at all," was the retort. "I did not express clearly what I mean. I think the run for place will be between Faustina and Lady Lucy. You think otherwise. I will put up money that Zuleika will beat Faustina, with odds of five to one against Faustina."

"Whew!" whistled Downdey, "you are mad."

"I have ten thousand dollars to back my madness, if I am," was the cool retort.

"I am not letting a snap like that pass by," declared Downdey; "put up your money."

The wager was laid, and the excitement in the room ran high. Opinion was divided, but the weight of judgment went to predict that Kimberlee and Brown would lose their money. Betting on Lady Lucy, it was thought, was a pretty sure thing.

After an hour or so Kimberlee and Beth went away, leaving the crowd to comment upon their prospects; and in a little time, after they had made arrangements for taking extra precautions against Lady Lucy's being tampered with during the night, Burdick, Downdey and the others followed their example.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FLYERS FLYING.

THE day of the great race dawned clear and bright.

The track was in its best and fastest condition. The surface was dry and hard, but not hard enough to make the animals sore and unwilling to exert themselves, and the subsoil was damp and firm.

Any one who is "up" in racing lore will recognize from the description that the condition of the track could not have been more favorable.

At an early hour the programme of the day was posted, and no sooner were the posters up than they attracted the attention of eager crowds.

The first race was to be a comparatively unimportant one, and then came the great Hippogriff Handicap.

For the benefit of those of our readers who may have an interest in the details of the affair, it may be well to set forth the entire programme of that race, giving the names of the horses and the weights assigned.

It was as follows:

SECOND CONTEST.

THE HIPPOGRIFF HANDICAP RACE.

This race is to be a sweepstakes of \$100 each, half forfeit, with \$10,000 added, of which \$2,500 to second and \$500 to third; two miles. The horses entered for this race, with the weights assigned to each, are:

Lady Lucy.....	135	Get There.....	120
Zuleika.....	130	Prattler.....	120
Faustina.....	125	Citizen.....	115
Docile.....	120	Detroit.....	115
Minion.....	120	Chinaman*.....	110

*First time entered.

At an earlier hour than on the previous day the crowds began to pour toward the course, and as soon as the grand stand was thrown open a stream of eager race-lovers began to flow in.

The early trains brought hundreds to Hunter-

ford, and the stages were kept busy carrying them out to the grounds as fast as they arrived. On every road vehicles of every sort were rolling toward the point of attraction, and the crowd was soon estimated away up in the thousands.

It was a great day, and everybody seemed to want to take part in it.

By the time the hour for the first race came round the grand stand was almost packed. Never had it been known to be so full of people so early in the day. Men and women, old and young, were out in force, all full of enthusiasm to do justice to the great event.

The news of the heavy betting on the horses had not been allowed to remain unheralded, and that had served to add to the interest in the race. Hunterford always did herself proud on the day of the Hippogriff Handicap, but on this occasion the town was giving herself a genuine surprise. She wondered where all the people could have come from.

In one of the best parts of the stand, almost in a line with the wire, were a party in whom we have an interest. They were Mr. and Mrs. Fenterton, their daughter Gracienna and Miss Cranston.

They had come early and had secured good places.

When the bugle sounded for the first race, and while the horses were gathering at the starting-post, two men made their way down among the seats to the place where Mr. Fenterton and his party were.

They were Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey.

When they reached their desired place near the two young ladies, young Burdick asked aloud:

"Will any two persons here sell their seats to us?"

It may not be generally known that this is a common practice in all places of the kind, and is made a regular business by a certain class of men. Seats in all such places of amusement, as well as places in line to the ticket-offices, are taken up by persons for no other purpose than to be resold at a premium.

Just behind the two young ladies two rough-looking fellows were seated, and one of them immediately responded:

"What's yer bid fer these?"

Burdick looked, and he could not have been suited better.

"Five dollars," he offered.

"Make it ten, an' they are yours."

"Here is your money."

It was quickly done, and attracted little attention except from those in the immediate vicinity.

Burdick and Downdey sat down, and immediately opened a conversation with the ladies. It was a cheeky proceeding on the part of Burdick, and little the less so on the part of Downdey. Mr. Fenterton would have nothing to say to Burdick, and but little to his companion.

Most of the conversation was commonplace at first, and it is useless to repeat it here. The two men tried to appear at their best, and perhaps succeeded in doing so.

In the mean time the horses had been brought to the post, and presently the start was made.

The race was a close and exciting one, and met with much cheering, and the grand stand was made to ring again and again. The race was won by the favorite, though another horse had made it lively work from first to last.

"And now for the event of the day," observed Burdick, when the first race was all over and the horses had been taken off.

"Yes," responded Miss Cranston, "and I am eager to see it."

"Of course your favorite is Lady Lucy."

"Of course it is not, then; I am for Zuleika."

"Ha, ha, ha! That is a mad choice. Why she is sure to be defeated. I have over a hundred thousand dollars at stake, and if I thought there was a possible hope for Zuleika I would tremble."

"I am in the same boat myself, but not quite so deep," put in Downdey.

"Then you are betting against your own horse, are you?" asked Eudora.

Miss Cranston's brother being a devotee of the turf, that young lady was well-posted in matters pertaining to the track, and could talk "horse" with any one.

"As against Lady Lucy, yes," Downdey answered. "I am backing Faustina for place though."

Just then they were joined by Jack Cranston, Eudora's brother, who succeeded in getting a seat, after standing a little while.

"You say you are betting against Lady Lucy?" he inquired, having overheard the remark.

"No, hardly that," Downdey explained; "but I am backing Faustina for place."

"Have you got any money to back that opinion?" Jack asked.

"Yes, a little, if you want to bet."

"I will bet two to one that Chinaman comes in ahead of Faustina."

Downdey was amazed. What did this mean? Was there a "tip" out that he had not got hold of? He did not know, and he could not ask.

"I'll take that snap," he said. "Here is fifty dollars to back Faustina."

"And here is a hundred to cover," responded Jack. "Mr. Fenterton, will you hold it?"

"Yes, to oblige you, Jack," Mr. Fenterton answered, and he took the money.

This single bet started a rumor through the stand, and before the horses came out Chinaman had a good many dollars laid on him for third place.

By and by the bugle sounded, and a hush fell over the stand, all eyes being turned toward the point of starting.

The first horse to appear there was Lady Lucy, but the others were soon with her, and the whole ten were brought on.

Lady Lucy was a beautiful chestnut mare, with four white legs and a blaze in the face. Her colors were blue and white. Zuleika was a mare as black as coal. Her colors were red and gold. Her rider had a handkerchief in his hand. Faustina was a bay, and red and green were her colors. Chinaman was a roan, whose color was, and very appropriately, perhaps, all yellow. The others need not be described, further than to state that the colors of Docile were white and red, and that of Get There, all red.

There was some little trouble experienced in getting the animals in good line at the post, but finally they were in tolerable good order, and the flag dropped.

Instantly they were away like the wind. Faustina had the lead by a good length and more, with Lady Lucy and Zuleika coming next on about an equal footing. After them came Get There, Docile and Chinaman in the order named. The other three brought up the rear, which they succeeded in holding to the last.

A deafening cheer arose, as the two favorites, the blue and the white, and the red and gold, dashed past the stand side by side, and the stand fairly trembled under the thunder of applause. It could not have been a better start for them.

When they went around the turn, the three, Lady Lucy, Zuleika, and Faustina were abreast, but when they entered the backstretch Lady Lucy had the lead, with Zuleika next, and Faustina third. Chinaman had crept ahead of Docile, and was pushing hard after Get There.

Up the backstretch they flew, and at the half post there was a clear half length of daylight between Lady Lucy and Zuleika, and as much between Zuleika and Faustina.

"What do you think about it now?" asked Alcander Burdick, addressing Miss Cranston.

Before she could reply, Mr. Fenterton turned around and demanded,

"What odds are you laying on Lady Lucy, Mr. Burdick?"

"Five to one, now," was the prompt answer.

"Good! here are two thousand dollars for you to cover."

No sooner said than done, and Burdick, hurriedly counting out ten one thousand dollar bills, put the stakes into the hands of Jack Cranston.

By this time the flyers were rounding the last turn and coming down the stretch like a flight of arrows from tight-strung bows. Lady Lucy had a grand lead, and was almost two lengths ahead of Zuleika, who was not more than half a length ahead on Faustina now, and was being pushed by Chinaman. Get There and Faustina were having a tight and well contested spurt.

On they came, and Lady Lucy passed under the string fully two lengths ahead of Zuleika. The cheer was tremendous. Zuleika came next, with now a good length of nothing between her and Faustina, and as she passed the stand her rider was whisking her flank with his handkerchief. Beth was still confident of the race, in spite of the appearances against him.

Faustina was drawing away from Get There, but Chinaman was creeping steadily up on her, and unless the latter gave out everything was in favor of his coming in for third place.

"What odds are you laying now?" demanded Mr. Fenterton turning again to Burdick.

"Ten to one, sir, ten to one," was the prompt and eager answer.

"Very well, sir, here are three thousand dollars more, if you will cover it. You may as well have all, as half."

"Will you take a note?"

"Yes."

Young Burdick snatched out his note-book, hurriedly wrote the brief but important instrument, and put it into the hands of Jack Cranston.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOMESTRETCH RUN.

THE flyers were flying on.

They had gone down the stretch, and were on the turn.

Eyes of thousands were upon them, and the result was awaited with bated breath. Round after round of applause shook the grand stand to its very foundation, and men and women seemed perfectly crazed with the excitement.

As soon as their bet had been arranged, both Mr. Fenterton and young Burdick looked to learn what was calling forth the cheering.

It was an agreeable sight to the one, but not so to the other.

Lady Lucy was just coming into the backstretch, and it could be seen that her rider was pushing her. Zuleika was gradually crawling up to her, and that without seeming to require much urging, either. Horse and rider were as one, and their motions were easy and harmonious. The black's neck was stretched out full, her ears were laid back flat, and her rider was lying far forward, whipping her gently with his handkerchief, now in his left hand.

It was exciting.

After the leaders thundered the others in the race. Chinaman was leading Faustina by half a length, two lengths behind Zuleika, and there was now half a length of daylight between Faustina and Get There. The other horses were enjoying a separate race further in the rear.

At the half-post the rider of Lady Lucy was seen to glance back, and when he saw that Zuleika was not a length behind him he began to use his whip freely. The favorite responded nobly, but could not draw away from the tireless Zuleika, although at every stride both increased the distance between themselves and Chinaman, who now had third place and seemed likely to hold it.

On and on and on they flew, and as they rounded the turn, Zuleika had closed up the span of daylight between them, and was pushing for the lead, although Lady Lucy had the slight advantage of the inside of the track.

Around they came, swiftly and steadily, and then they entered the final desperate struggle on the stretch.

The grand stand thundered its applause until it sounded like the storm wail of old ocean on a rock-bound coast, and the fluttering of handkerchiefs looked like the white caps of foam-crested breakers.

Men and women sprung up in and on their seats, shouting the name of their favorite, and, seemingly, trying by their own exertions to urge that favorite on to victory. It was an excitement that was wild, intoxicating, delirious.

"What do think about it now, Mr. Downdey?" cried Miss Cranston, as she turned her excited face for an instant to him.

"It is hot," was the answer; "but Lucy will win."

"And Faustina?"

"You will see her run ahead to third."

The others were too intensely interested to speak. Alcander Burdick was taking on like a wild man. He was pounding the seat in front of him with his cane, and was yelling at the height of his voice for Lady Lucy to extend herself and win. But he was no exception. Others were as wild as he.

Down the stretch the leaders came as straight as an arrow's flight, and the same simile may be used to express their swiftness. Zuleika was creeping steadily up, and they were soon neck-and-neck. But they did not remain so. The red-and-gold moved on foot by foot, until those colors had the lead by a head, then a neck, and were moving up and up.

The rider of Lady Lucy was half beside himself, as it looked. He was using whip and spurs in a desperate manner, but they were of no avail. The mare seemed to be doing her best.

The wearer of the red and gold seemed perfectly cool and easy. His handkerchief was now in his right hand, and with it he still whipped Zuleika gently, and if he was doing any urging it was by command.

The thunder of applause on the grand stand, and from the thousand of throats on the lawn, was like the voice of literal thunder, and it

seemed to shake the very ground. It was a applause in one steady, prolonged, overwhelming volume. Its like had never been known on the course.

At the last furlong Zuleika was a little more than a neck ahead of Lady Lucy, and immediately after passing that point Beth changed his manner of driving. He rose partly straight in the saddle, his mouth was seen to open as though with a scream of command, and he applied both whip and spur.

The effect was magical. The black mare extended herself in tremendous leaps, seeming barely to touch the ground, and bore down upon the wire like a swift-winged bird.

In a few seconds more it was over, and Zuleika had won by a good length.

The applause ended in one grand explosion, then, and only revived a little when Chinaman ran under in the third place, five or six lengths behind Lady Lucy, with Faustina more than a length behind him.

Get There had dropped back, and was leading the laggards in the race by barely a length.

It was all over, and immense sums of money had changed hands.

One quiet observer of it all, and who has not been mentioned, was Eugene Kimberlee. He was in the betting ring, under the stand, and near the telegraph office, at a point where he had a commanding view of the track.

At the first time around, his face had had a very dubious expression, and the handkerchief which Beth had in hand as a signal of his confidence, only seemed to mock him. He had noted how steadily Lady Lucy had gained in the lead, and he felt that the race was lost.

As the horses went tearing up the backstretch, however, his hopes found a better foundation, and that handkerchief signal had a more promising aspect.

As soon as the contest was ended, he left the ring to go and congratulate Beth upon his grand achievement.

Up in the stand the excitement was intense.

"Mr. Fenterton," said Jack Cranston, as soon as the result was known, "allow me the pleasure of handing you your winnings," and he handed over the money and papers which he had been holding.

"Thank you, Jack," responded Mr. Fenterton, taking the winnings; "allow me to return the compliment by handing you yours," and he did so.

"Thank you, sir," returned Jack. "We have not made a bad thing of it."

"It is pretty certain that I have not, at any rate," Mr. Fenterton agreed.

"There has been something crooked about this race," charged Alcander Burdick. "You were betting on a sure thing, it looks to me. I believe that mare carried light weight."

The young man was pale and trembling, and little wonder. He had wagered and lost more than a hundred and fifty thousand dollars—fully half of his fortune. It had proved a bad day for him.

It was no less bad for Templeton Downdey, who was out about fifty thousand.

"I agree with you," the latter declared. "There has been something out of order here, and I mean to know what it is. We will know that fellow's true weight."

"How about Faustina for third?" inquired Miss Cranston, tauntingly.

"She has been cheated out of it, that is how about it," Downdey snapped.

Miss Cranston laughed, and the two men went off in high dudgeon.

Mr. Fenterton and his party remained for the next race, and it is needless to say that they were in high spirits—especially Mr. Fenterton himself.

Eugene Kimberlee had gone direct to the stable, where he found Beth Fenterton helping the other men in caring for Zuleika. The mare stood with her head down, and was trembling in every limb. But she was all right, and was being rubbed and bathed briskly and thoroughly.

"Mr. Brown!" Kimberlee exclaimed, "allow me to congratulate you," and he held out his hand.

Beth took it, and they shook hands warmly, drawing away from the others.

"What did I tell you?" Beth reminded. "I was sure that I could do it."

"But I thought the race was lost, the first time around; in spite of your signal."

"So I feared you would, but it was that that won it for us. If I had pushed Zuleika, then I would have lost sure. She would not have held out at that speed for a half further; I mean at the speed of the second round."

"I understand you. Well, it is over, and we have made a big thing out of it. I wonder what use your father made of his money?"

"Good use, you can rest assured of that, if he got the chance. I hope he got Burdick on the hip."

"So do I, after the mean work he has been guilty of. Ha! here the rascal comes now."

"Sure enough, Burdick and Downdey both together. They look sore and stubborn, and I would not be surprised if they intend to make trouble."

Burdick and Downdey came up, and Burdick exclaimed:

"What manner of crooked work was there in that race?"

"None that I am aware of," was Kimberlee's cool answer.

"You can't tell us that," growled Downdey, "for the heavy bets you made proves it. You had a snap, by some trick or other."

"You are talking rattle-headed, sir," observed Kimberlee. "We only took up bets of your own offering, and if we were willing to stake big sums, that was our business. The race was too fast and too close to talk of tricks."

"How much do you weigh, sir?" demanded Burdick, turning to Beth.

"You can learn that without coming to me," Beth answered.

"I believe you rode under your allotted weight and I am going to find out about it."

"Come right along to the scales," Beth invited, "and we will set your mind at rest on that score."

"Yes, we will do what we can to satisfy you, since our words are not credited," added Kimberlee, and they started to put the question to the test.

When they came to the scales Beth stepped upon the platform, and ordered Burdick to do the weighing.

Burdick was nothing loth, and started in at the hundred and twenty-five point, which he found did not tip the beam as he had hoped it might. He ran it on up, twenty-seven, twenty-nine, and to thirty, but still the balance point was not found.

"Zuleika's weight was to have been one hundred and thirty," reminded Kimberlee. "Go on, sir."

Burdick's face was very red, and he ran the balance along the beam until it came to the thirty-four notch, where the beam tipped.

"Are you satisfied?" Beth asked.

A big crowd had quickly gathered around, the weight was manifest to all, and with half-muttered threats upon their lips Burdick and Downdey slunk away.

When the judges' report of the race was posted, it read as follows:

The Hippogriff Handicap Sweepstakes of \$100 each, half forfeit, with \$10,000 added, of which \$2,500 to second and \$500 to third; two miles:
Eugene Kimberlee's bl. m. Zuleika, 130 (Mr. Brown)..... 1
Alcander Burdick's ch. m. Lady Lucy 135 (Trippe... 2
John Phillips's rn. g. Chinaman 110 (Mann)..... 3
Time 8:31 8-4, 8:32."

CHAPTER X.

DESPERATE SCHEMES.

THE performance of the roan gelding, Chinaman, was a surprise to nearly everybody. It was something that had not been looked for.

The value of the animal was increased ten-fold, and Mr. Phillips was correspondingly happy. So were those who had backed Chinaman against Faustina for place, on the tip furnished by the bet between Jack Cranston and Templeton Downdey.

So great was the excitement of the race, that the third event of the day was hardly noticed, although it proved a good one.

In the mean time, when Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey slunk away, after the scene at the scales, Eugene Kimberlee and Beth Fenterton went to the club-house.

They were both aware that it was to their interest to get hold of their winnings as soon as they could do so. Not that they doubted the honor of the stake-holder, or anything of the sort, but they knew that Burdick and Downdey were desperate, and it was a "bird-in-the-hand-worth-two-in-the-bush" policy with them.

Judging from the crowd going in the same direction, others were of the same opinion.

They had not been in the club-house long when Burdick and Downdey entered, and Burdick, as soon as he caught sight of Kimberlee, called him and Beth forward to the office.

"You have won, it seems, gentlemen," he re-

marked, "and I am not the man to do much kicking, although I am still of the opinion that there was something in the wind that I did not get hold of."

"You have a right to your opinion, sir," returned Kimberlee.

When they entered the office Burdick acknowledged his loss to the committee, and Downdey and Murtagh the same, and the winnings were turned over to the winners.

Beth and Kimberlee pocketed their money, treated the house, and set out immediately for the village.

"That was something of a surprise to me," remarked Kimberlee, as they rode in the stage from the course, happening to be the only passengers; "I thought it would be like drawing teeth for him to see his money go."

"And I'll bet it was, too," declared Beth. "He was forced to act the honorable, though, with the eyes of the whole Association upon him."

"Yes, that is true. I did not think he would be seen at the office, however, until after we had collected our winnings."

"I will now return your money to you," proposed Beth, "as this is a good opportunity," and he counted out the required sum and handed it over.

"And now," he added, "of course you will accept half of the winnings."

"Not by any means!" exclaimed Kimberlee. "It is yours, every cent of it."

"I would feel better if you would—"

"Hang it, Beth, did you not insist that you would be responsible for the loan, refusing to take it on any other conditions? What if you had lost? Pocket your money, my boy, and say not another word about my taking any of it."

"Well, if you insist upon it—"

"And I do. I am in your debt for the great service you have rendered by riding Zuleika. I will—"

"Not another word. Let us call it square."

"Very well. Let me see, how much did you corral?"

"Just seventy-four thousand dollars."

"Whew! Little wonder that they are cut up."

"I should say not, with the haul you made, too. How much was it?"

"Seventy-seven thousand."

"Great Scott! It does not seem possible. It is the fact, however, none the less. But, can you make him honor his note?"

"It will be a sorry day for him if he don't, that is all."

So their conversation ran, until they reached town, where they put their money in the bank, not wanting to carry it on their persons longer than they could help.

In the mean time another conversation was being carried on in a private room of the Pansy Club House. The persons engaged in it were Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey.

"You did that like a gentleman of nerve," complimented Downdey, when they had closed and locked the door of the room, referring to the scene at the office. "One would think that it was a mere nothing for you to lose such a sum."

"It was the same with you," returned Burdick. "You never winced. But, that loss to me is a mere something, and I have brought you up here to ask you how I am going to get around it. I have lost half what I am worth."

"It is bad, certainly," Downdey reflected, "and we thought we had such a sure thing, too. I am even worse off than you are."

"What! Why, you have lost only about fifty thousand, while mine runs up to more than a hundred and fifty. What are you talking about?"

"But mine was all cash."

"Ha! what are you driving at? Do you mean that I ought to repudiate the notes I have given?"

"No, not that; that would kill you on the track; but you are a fool if you do not try to get hold of them and destroy them. That can be done, if it is worked right, and no one need ever suspect you of having a hand in it."

"That is just the thing! How is it to be done? But, wouldn't I be called on to pay them anyhow?"

"Suppose you are, would you not be a fool to pay such a sum of money on a note, and not have the note returned to you? All you have to tell them is, when the note is presented you are ready to pay it."

"I believe you are right, and that is what I will do. I have got to do something of the kind. I can never stand it to meet them."

"It need not be necessary if you play your hand right."

"But, the question of how, that is what troubles me."

"You will need a good, trusty helper in the scheme, and I think that I can put you onto just the man you want."

"Good! Who is he?"

"His name is Simmins, and he used to be a detective. Got caught in some sort of a game with some crooks, though, and fell from grace—so to say. He is just the fellow to do the job for you."

"Can you get hold of him?"

"Yes; I shall go to the city to-night, and I will send him out to you. If any man can do the work for you, he can. You will have to pay him well, though, say a thousand or so."

"I am willing to pay that. It will be getting off cheap. Send along the man, and I will put the case into his hands."

"I will do so."

"And now, one other thing," continued Burdick. "I want to get hold of that mare Zuleika. How am I to do that?"

"Buy her."

"I know, but suppose Kimberlee don't want to sell, or suppose his figure is too high for me, how then?"

"In that case you won't be able to get what you want, I should say," was the response.

"But I must have her."

"Are you going to part with Lady Lucy?"

"Yes, if I can get hold of the black, I will."

"Why don't you try to trade her off with Kimberlee for the black?"

"I do not suppose it would be of any use. Zuleika is the better of the two, as she proved herself to-day, and it is not likely that he would make such a trade at any terms."

"I do not know about that. Why don't you try it, anyhow?"

"I suppose I shall have to. You see I would like to have the black for the big Cedar Park Purse, which comes off a week from to-day. It is not likely that he will part with her on any terms until after that event comes off."

"If you got her do you think you could get Brown to ride her for you?"

"I would be afraid to trust the fellow if I could. He and Kimberlee are pretty thick, you know."

"Yes, that is so, but I do not believe any one else could ride the mare as he did to-day."

"I am not so sure of that. You put more to the account of jockeys in a race than I do. I'll bet that Trippers can take the black and make just as good a race as she made to-day. The speed is all there, and why shouldn't he?"

"I'll tell you what you might do," Downdey suggested.

"And what is that?"

"If you can get hold of the mare, and enter her for the race, it would be a good stroke for you to get hold of that man Dennising to ride her."

"But, the committee has ruled him off."

"Let him come on in disguise."

"You think he is a good one?"

"I know he is, if you can keep him sober. I believe he would have run the mare to-day as well as that fellow Brown did."

"Then I shall look around for him. I had a little tiff with him this morning, but no doubt he has forgotten all about that by this time. I will make him a good offer, and if I get the mare he shall ride her."

"It will be a stroke of policy."

"You think he is better than Trippers, then?"

"I do not say that, but he is somewhat acquainted with Zuleika, and ought to take her around in fast time."

"Well, it shall be done if I can make it work."

"And, by the way," Downdey brought up, "I want to get hold of that little rascal, Chinaman. How am I to go to work to do it?"

"You ask me too—"

A knock at the door interrupted him.

Burdick got up and opened the door, and there stood no other than Mr. Phillips, the owner of Chinaman, himself.

"I was told that you were up here," he observed, "and I have ventured to come up. I want to see you and Mr. Downdey on business."

"Come right in, you are heartily welcome," young Burdick invited, and throwing open the door he allowed Mr. Phillips to enter, and they were soon seated at a table.

"I want to see if I can buy Lady Lucy and Faustina," announced Mr. Phillips, coming right to the point.

Downdey could hardly hide his eagerness.

"You cannot buy Lady Lucy, sir," answered Burdick, promptly. "No use for any further talk on that head."

The result may be summed up. Mr. Phillips

and Downdey came to an understanding, after a little time, and their animals changed hands, Mr. Phillips pocketing the neat sum of five thousand dollars boot-money.

Mr. Phillips had a purpose in view.

CHAPTER XI.

PLOTS AND COUNTERPLOTS.

THERE was one young gentleman in the betting ring that morning who laid all his money on Zuleika, and the amount he had to lay was two hundred and fifty dollars.

That young man was the disgraced jockey, Dennising.

He came out seven hundred and fifty dollars richer in consequence.

Not that he had gone according to his own judgment, for he had not, but he had backed the opinion of Brown, the rider who had taken his place. If he dared to risk a fortune on Zuleika, surely he ought to know what he was doing, and Dennising had no further confidence in Lady Lucy for the race.

When the fellow pocketed his money he felt that he was a man of means. The ring was hardly big enough to hold him. If luck stuck to him, he was bound to make a fortune during the races, with such a start as he now had.

At the close of the day's sport, however, he was without a dollar in his pocket. He had found to his cost that he had no talent for betting, or if he had he did not know how to use it.

That night he was seen around the veranda of the Pansy Club House, and acted as though he wanted to see some one.

After a time he saw Alcander Burdick come out and walk away in the direction of the stables, and followed him.

About half-way between the two places he overtook him and spoke to him.

"Mr. Burdick," he said, "can I have a word with you?"

"Who are you, and what do you want?" young Burdick demanded.

"I am Dennising," was the explanation, "an' I want to see you on a little business."

"Oh! is that you, Dennising? You are the very fellow I wanted to see."

This was rather a surprise to the young man, and he could not imagine what was coming.

"What did you want to see me for?" he asked.

"I will tell you presently. State your own wants first."

"Well, to tell the truth, I am bu'sted, an' I thought you might give me a little boost so that I can catch on to-morrow at the ring."

"Ho! that is it, is it? It looks as if you have been catching on at the ring already. What is it to me if you are broke? You have no claim on me. I will, however, give you enough to keep you alive for a day or two."

"How about that old gentleman what gave me th' two-fifty?" the jockey intimated.

"He was a fool, that is all that I can say about him," was the answer. "What are you driving at, anyhow?"

In the semi-darkness the jockey could not see the flush that had come into Burdick's face at the mention of the affair.

"If th' old gent was a fool I am not," was the stubborn retort, "an' if that same old gent don't come down with a few rocks I will let out on him, that is what I am drivin' at."

"You will have to go to your old gentleman himself, then, for I am not his private secretary," returned Burdick. "You don't want to think that I know anything about him, further than the interest I showed in him this morning."

"That same old gent was you, Mister Burdick."

Burdick caught the jockey by the throat, and would have choked him had not the young man been strong enough to break away from him.

"I'll choke the very life out of you, if you so much as mention such a thing!" Burdick hissed. "I defy you to prove anything of the sort. For two cents I would have you arrested. You cur, you, what do you mean by it?"

"Well, I mean just what I said," was the answer, "and if you want to arrest me, why go ahead. I would like to have two-fifty more to try my hand with to-morrow."

The fellow well knew that he would have to show nerve to carry his point, and while he was very doubtful of success, yet he was not ready to give up.

"Dast your impudence!" exclaimed Burdick, "I have a notion to throttle you. What would I want to buy up Zuleika for? Haven't you heard how I lost by backing Lady Lucy? Does

that show lack of confidence in her? Why, I could laugh at you! Who would believe such a yarn as you would tell? You are welcome to blot your story as soon as you feel like it."

Dennising here gave up. What Burdick said was true, he would not be able to make anybody believe such a story. He did not know, however, that a little more of the right kind of pushing would have brought him money to hold his tongue.

"Well," he said, "I will let it rest for now, but I would like to have a little stake from somebody, for, as I said, I am dead broke."

"I will give you a little out of charity," returned Burdick, handing him a bill, "but you don't want to come to me with any more such nonsense on your tongue, for I may not have as much patience with you another time."

"And what did you want to see me for?" Dennising asked.

"You knocked it all out of me with your foolishness," was the response. "I had a proposition to make to you, but now I don't know whether I ought to have anything to do with you or not."

"You had somethin' for me ter do?"

"Well, yes, if things turn out as I want them to, I had."

"What was it?"

"I want you to ride Zuleika for me in the next race—that is, the Cedar Park Purse race."

"Whew! Do you intend to buy her?"

"Yes, if I can. Do you think you can make her do as good work as she did to-day?"

"Of course I can. Didn't I watch th' race, an' didn't I ketch onto th' way that feller Brown handled her? Besides, I overheard somethin' after th' race that put me onto somethin'."

"What was that?"

"Why, I heard Brown an' Kimberlee talkin', an' Brown said he was sure he could win the race when he started. Then he went on to tell how he did it. He said he did not push Zuleika at first, but held her strength for th' last, an' that carried him in. It is easy as nothin'."

"And could you do the same thing, do you think?"

"Of course I could. But you know that I am ruled off th' track."

"Yes, I know all about that, but you could disguise yourself and come to me under another name, and I would put you on."

"Ha! that makes me think of somethin' else, an' somethin' that knocked th' saddle right out from under me when I tumbled to it."

"What is it?"

"What d'ye s'pose? Who d'ye s'pose that feller Brown really is?"

"I don't know, I am sure. I supposed he was Brown, and that was all there was about it."

"Well, there is more than that to him. He is Beth Fenterton, son of th' man that owned Lady Lucy afore she came into your hands."

"Great Scott! You are right! Now I know him! I knew I had seen him before, but I could not tell where. He has shaved off his beard, which he has worn ever since he was able to raise one, and what a change it makes in him!"

Alcander Burdick had food for reflection now. He saw that the Fenterton family had fleeced him to the tune of seventy thousand dollars, if it could be called by such a term. He had fallen into their hands, and they had got back all that he had taken from them, nearly. But, he still had Lady Lucy.

"That is just who it is, an' nobody else," Dennising affirmed.

"Yes, yes, I know it now, and I am sorry that I did not know it before. It might have been money in my pocket if I had. He is a terror of a rider."

"You are right there, but he couldn't do better than he did to-day if he tried, so you needn't be afraid of him."

"But how about Lady Lucy? Could she do better?"

"You kin judge of that yourself. She made th' fastest time this mornin' that she ever made, an' that by a quarter of a minute. Didn't you see how Trippers put it to her?"

"Yes, that's so, and I think Zuleika could do her up again."

"She could more than do it. She has more bottom than I ever thought of, and more than Beth Fenterton thinks she has. I'll bet that I can take her twice around in three thirty-one."

"You think you can do that?"

"I am sure of it."

"Then you shall ride her—all provided that I can get hold of her. Consider yourself in my employ, and at full pay from this hour. Do not mention a word to any one. And if I hear of your drinking a drop between now and next

week this time, I will drop you like a hot potato."

"I am your man, and I'll keep straight just for th' satisfaction of revenge, if for nothin' else. I will beat that record of to-day, or I will bu'st a strap."

So their little compact was made.

Other matters of interest were being talked over in another place.

At the residence of Mr. Fenterton quite a lively little party were assembled. There were, first, Mr. and Mrs. Fenterton, and Gracienna and Beth. Then there were Miss Cranston, Eugene Kimberlee, and the Mr. Phillips whose acquaintance we have made.

Everybody was jolly and joyous.

"If only I had Lady Lucy back in my stable," remarked Mr. Fenterton, "I should be quite happy. But, I suppose it is useless to wish for that."

"Can you not bring her back in the same manner in which she was taken from you?" suggested Mrs. Fenterton. "You have his note for a big sum, and it will not be easy for him to meet it, after his losses of to-day."

"He would sacrifice everything before he would give me that satisfaction, I think," was the reply.

"That mare shall be yours after the next race, Mr. Fenterton," spoke up Kimberlee.

Beth had made known to his father who it was who had sent him the five thousand, and Mr. Fenterton had repaid it.

"How so?" Mr. Fenterton asked. "How will you bring it about?"

"Beth and I have a little scheme on foot leading to that end," was the answer. "I am going to try to trade Zuleika for her, and then let Lady Lucy against Zuleika at the race."

"But," said Mr. Fenterton, in surprise, "Zuleika can outrun Lady Lucy, it appears. What good will that do you?"

"She will never outrun her again," spoke up Beth. "Lady Lucy can outrun Zuleika with ease, and add two minutes to her record of to-day, and I am sure of it. I shall ride her myself, if the arrangement can be made."

This announcement was a surprise, and an animated debate followed. Not only was that arrangement fully settled, but it was shown that Mr. Phillips had been acting for Beth for the securing of Faustina. It was safely predicted that if everything came off according to programme, the next race would be one never to be forgotten, and one in which many surprises would be in store.

CHAPTER XII.

A DESPERATE GAME BLOCKED.

NEXT morning Alcander Burdick was at the hotel of the meaner sort in the town of Hunterford, the one of which mention has been made before, and was again in his disguise as the old gentleman.

The proprietor of the hotel was a man whom he had in his power, and so it was perfectly safe for him to play the double role there.

He was in the bar-room, when a stranger entered and inquired for Mr. Hunnybanks.

"That is him, that man over there," the proprietor directed, pointing out Burdick.

Young Burdick overheard, but pretended that he did not.

The stranger went up to him, touched him on the arm, and asked:

"Are you Mr. Hunnybanks, sir?"

"Yes," was the answer, "that is my name. Who are you, sir, if I may ask?"

"My name is Simmins. I am from the city."

"Oh! indeed, yes; I was expecting you. Who directed you to me?"

"A friend of mine, Mr. Downdey."

"Good! You are the person that I want, then. Come, we will go up to my room."

"Just as you please, sir."

Mr. Hunnybanks led the way, and they went up to the room, where the pseudo old gentleman closed and locked the door, and invited his visitor to be seated.

Mr. Simmins sat down, dropping his hat on the floor at the side of his chair, and awaited the pleasure of his patron. He was a short, thick-set man, with a red face and a redder nose, and had a startlingly stubborn mustache, every hair of which seemed to be determined to grow in a different angle.

"You are a detective, I understand, Mr. Simmins," Mr. Hunnybanks remarked, as he, too, took a seat.

"Yes, sir, that is my business," was the affirmation.

"Did Mr. Downdey tell you what I want of you?"

"No, sir, no further than he said it was an

important case, and that you would pay well. You will have to, to engage me."

"So I suppose, sir. I presume you are a man to be trusted?"

"Sir, such a question is almost an insult to one of my profession. I will not take offense, however, but will assure you that business secrets are sacred with me."

"That is what I like to hear, sir. Now, I will give you an idea of what is before you, and then you will be able to set your price for the work. I warn you that it must not be too high a price, however."

"Very good, sir, very good. Go ahead, sir."

"Well, a friend of mine—I will not mention any names yet—has done a very foolish thing, and I want to help him out. You understand that. The nature of his foolishness is this: He has given out two notes at sight, one for thirty thousand dollars and one for seventy-five thousand, and he cannot meet them. He is in despair, as I may say. Now, what I want of you is to get those two notes into your hands, turn them over to me, and let me destroy them. Now, what is your figure?"

"Hum! that is rather a risky piece of business. It is a little out of the regular, too. I could not think of touching it for less than a thousand dollars in cold cash."

"That is pretty steep, sir, but under the circumstances I will pay it."

"Then I am your man. Now give me the whole case."

"I will do so. It is a little worse than I stated it at first, but your part in it is the same. There is forgery at the bottom of it. My friend forged the name of a well-known and wealthy young man of this neighborhood to the notes, and passed them as genuine. If he could take them back it would be all right, but he cannot. If they go to protest he will be discovered. See?"

"I see, and I don't see," was the response.

Burdick was playing a sharp game. He did not want suspicion to stop at the door of Alcander Burdick, in case any failure was made on the part of his man.

"Well," he went on, "I will explain further. The name of the person whose name has been forged is Alcander Burdick. The notes are in the hands of Algernon Fenterton and Eugene Kimberlee. They were hashed up at the races yesterday. Now it is likely that those notes will be presented to Burdick pretty soon, unless they are stopped, and that would be bad indeed. You must get hold of them without delay, and turn them over to me."

The ex-detective screwed up his mouth in a comical way, and closed his right eye.

"That story is altogether too thin," he quietly observed.

"What do you mean?" demanded Mr. Hunnybanks, fiercely.

"Don't git on your ear," was the calm advice, "it isn't necessary. What I can see with the naked eye does not require a microscope, sir. You need not have added the forgery story at all. I will take the rest of it as it stands, and your 'friend' shall be rescued. Those notes shall soon be in your hands, Mr. Hunnybanks, and your thousand dollars in mine. Now go ahead and tell me all about these parties who hold the notes, where they are to be found, and so forth, and I will undertake to recover them."

Mr. Hunnybanks did so, and after some further conversation Mr. Simmins put on his hat and set out upon his mission.

Alcander Burdick was playing a desperate game.

None the less desperate a game was his hiring ready to undertake, with the prospective reward of a thousand dollars in view.

If ever a genuine detective "hustled" in a just cause, Mr. Simmins "hustled" in this unrighteous one. He did "tall hustling," as a Westerner might express it.

By careful questioning he found that Eugene Kimberlee had spent the night at the home of Mr. Fenterton, and adopting a hasty disguise, he hurried out to Mr. Fenterton's place.

Arriving there, he requested an interview with Mr. Fenterton and Mr. Kimberlee, stating that he had come on business from Mr. Burdick.

The detective was no fool, even though a knave, and he saw through the case he had to deal with.

When the interview was granted, and he was alone in the library with Mr. Fenterton and Mr. Kimberlee, he stated his business.

"I have come from Mr. Burdick," he said, "in regard to those notes. Mr. Burdick wants to take them up just as soon as he can, but desires to know how much grace you will allow him."

"So far as I am concerned, he will not get any," answered Mr. Fenterton, promptly. "He ought to know that, after the way he pushed me, and he is a cheeky cur to ask any such thing."

"And what will you do?" turning to Kimberlee.

"Well, my claim is so large," Kimberlee answered, "that I am disposed to show a little mercy toward him, and give him the opportunity to meet Mr. Fenterton. But, I will see himself and arrange that with him. I do not know you, and do not know what relation you hold to him in the matter."

"Why, I am one of his city lawyers," answered Simmins, promptly. "I have the matter in hand for him, as he is too busy to attend to it personally."

"Oh, that is the case, is it?" interrogated Mr. Fenterton. "Perhaps he will be too busy to see me and my lawyer to-day."

"On the contrary, sir, he desires to see both you and Mr. Kimberlee. He is in the village, and would like to have you come and confer with him at the Hunterford Hotel at eleven o'clock."

The Hunterford Hotel was not the one of the third rate that has been mentioned, but was the best house in the place.

"Well, we will try and accommodate him if that is the case," Mr. Fenterton promised. "We will try to be there not later than twelve."

"And bring the notes with you."

"Yes, if it is desired."

"Very well; and my business being at an end I will be going."

But little more was said, and Mr. Simmins got into his buggy, which he had hired for the drive, and hastened away.

He lost no time on the return trip, but rather crowded his horse, and when he turned it over to its owner it was pretty well heated.

Half an hour later Mr. Fenterton and Mr. Kimberlee set out for the village, with Beth seated in the box of the vehicle behind. Mr. Phillips had not remained at the house all night, and as Beth was not coming back that night, he did not want to take a horse himself.

When they were within half a mile of the village a genuine surprise met them. Two rough-looking men with masks over their faces stepped out from among the bushes at the sides of the road, drawn revolvers in their hands, and one of them cried out:

"Whoop! Hands up, there, trav'lers, or we will make holes in ye that pigeons kin fly through!"

It was more than startling, in that quiet country, and Mr. Fenterton had obeyed the command before he knew what had happened, almost.

Not so Kimberlee. As soon as the first instant of the shock had passed, his hand moved toward his hip.

"Hold on, there, mister," came the warning, "don't try that! Up with your hands, or we will plug you as sure as th' sun shines."

There was that in the command that led Kimberlee to obey. He had no desire to learn how it would feel to have a bullet in his body.

"There, that is sense," said the spokesman for the two, "an' now you want ter hold right still while my friend here goes through you. We mean business right from the shoulder, an' it won't do ye no good ter kick. Now, Dan, go fer 'em."

The silent ones stepped forward toward the carriage, and the other held his revolvers ready for action at the first show of resistance.

But there was something more to follow. They were not aware that Beth Fenterton was in the box of the vehicle, and were not made aware of it, either, until a surprise was sprung upon them as great as, or greater than, the one they had given.

At the critical moment there came a pistol shot from the rear of the buggy, and the man who was standing guard tumbled headlong in the dust; and in the same instant Beth sprung out and presented his pistol at the head of the other.

The tables were turned completely.

Without the loss of a second Kimberlee was out of the buggy and over the fallen man, and they were prisoners in no time.

Their masks were quickly snatched off, and what was the surprise to find that one of them was no other than the man who had called at the Fenterton residence only a little time before.

The ex-detective's game had failed utterly, thanks to Beth Fenterton, and he was in a bad fix. His confederate was not dead, but only stunned, as Beth's bullet had merely grazed his head, although Beth had fired to kill.

They were taken to the village, and were put into jail under the charge of attempted highway robbery, and it looked as though they were booked for a long term at the State's Prison.

But, Mr. Simmins had a big card to play, and did not seem at all frightened.

CHAPTER XIII. THE FLYERS CHANGE HANDS.

BETH FENTERTON, his father and Eugene Kimberlee saw through the game that had been attempted, but which had met with such signal failure.

They recognized it as a desperate effort on the part of Alcander Burdick to get hold of the notes.

When they saw who their prisoners were, or one of them at least, then the truth flashed into their minds instantly. And they were not greatly surprised, either, for it was no more than they might have expected from a man of Burdick's lack of principle.

Having disposed of their prisoners, they repaired to the Huntersford Hotel to learn whether young Burdick was really there, and to hold a consultation as to how they should proceed in the matters they had in hand.

When they arrived they found that their man was not there.

Burdick had not been there, luckily for him, and having got wind of what had happened to his hireling, did not go there.

It was his main desire now to keep his skirts clear of all complicity in the disgraceful affair, and to keep suspicion from his door. It would never do for it to be thought that he had had a hand in the attempt at robbery.

As the matter stood, Mr. Fenterton and the others might have their suspicions, but what did they amount to? They could not prove them, and it was not likely that they would try to do so. If he could get the men out on bail, and keep them from making a confession, he would be safe. Even did they confess, he might be able to put the lie upon them. He would deny ever having seen them before, and he could get Downdey to deny any part in such a scheme.

With these thoughts in mind, the young rascal hurried off to the club-house at the race-course, resolved to know nothing about the matter.

"Well," questioned Mr. Fenterton, when he and the others found themselves in a room in the hotel, "what are we going to do about it?"

"We will not let our suspicion become known yet," answered Beth. "We will go on as though nothing had happened, and will consider the would-be-robbers as mere footpads of a desperate type."

"I agree with you," supported Kimberlee. "We will set Burdick's mind easy on that score, and go right on as though nothing had happened."

"I guess you are right," agreed Mr. Fenterton. "I will go for him with my note immediately, then, and you, Kimberlee, will follow with the effort to make a trade for Lady Lucy, as agreed."

"Exactly so, sir. Then we will let matters take their course until after the day of the great race."

"That is it. But, Scott! I tremble when I think how near he came to getting hold of the notes."

"It was a close shave, and no mistake," Kimberlee agreed to that. "They were desperate fellows, and only for Beth they would have carried their point. It was a most unlooked-for adventure in this part of the country. Such things are common in the West, but this is the first case of the kind that I have heard of in this State."

"And what will be done with the rascals?" questioned Mr. Fenterton.

"They will be bailed out, that is as sure as you live," answered Beth. "Burdick will not dare refuse, and they will be sure to demand it of him."

"That looks clear," coincided Kimberlee.

"And will it be to our interest to allow that to go on? Had we not better use our influence to have bail refused?"

"No, I would say not," objected Beth. "We can afford to let them get away, and we need not be too hard on young Burdick, after we have humbled him sufficiently, if he is disposed to repent and reform."

"Well, well, that is so, for his father was a man of honor, and my best friend. We will let matters take their own course."

An hour later, Mr. Fenterton and his lawyer came across Burdick at the Pansy Club House, and requested an interview.

It was granted. The young rascal was at his best, and was playing well his part. He

referred to his losses, said he desired to make his payments as speedily as possible, and was willing to do whatever would please Mr. Fenterton.

Mr. Fenterton wanted the value of the note immediately.

"Very well, you shall have it," was the affable compliance. "I have not the ready money, however, but will transfer its value in property."

It was so arranged. They went to Hunterford, met Burdick's lawyer, and in as short a time as possible, Mr. Fenterton had regained, in due form, all the land that the young man had taken from him by foreclosing his mortgage only a little time previously.

This was a bitter pill for Alcander Burdick, but he took it without any outward manifestation of its disagreeable taste.

In the afternoon of the same day a hearing was granted to the two men who had been lodged in jail, as they were urgent in their demand to have a hearing, and the result was that they were sent back to jail to await the action of the Grand Jury, with bail fixed at five thousand dollars each.

Later in the day a stranger appeared in town, hunted up the authorities, and laid down ten thousand dollars in cash, as security for the appearance of the two rascals when wanted.

On these terms they were allowed to go, and they lost no time in shaking the dust of that town from their feet.

Alcander Burdick was positively in hard luck. Of course this money had come out of his pocket, but he had played his hand so skillfully that he thought no suspicion could be attached to him.

With all his bad luck, however, there was a little of the other sort, to his way of thinking, and one of his pet schemes worked to his entire satisfaction.

It has been shown that he desired to get hold of the mare Zuleika, and with that object in view he had sent a request for a meeting with her owner, Kimberlee.

Kimberlee was just on the point of setting out to look him up when the messenger found him.

"Ha! what does this mean?" he thought. "There is something in the wind, or he would not have sent for me. Perhaps he wants to feel of me regarding the note I hold against him. We shall see."

Without any appearance of being in a hurry, he answered the message, and in due time presented himself at the requested place of meeting, the Pansy Club House.

Burdick greeted him cordially, and invited him up to a private room.

Kimberlee accepted, and when there he was offered wine and cigars, the former of which he declined, fearing that there might be some trick in it to drug him for the purpose of securing the note.

When they were seated, Burdick opened the subject that he had in mind.

"Mr. Kimberlee," he began, "that Zuleika of yours is a wonderful animal."

"She did a good stroke of work yesterday, that is true," Kimberlee assented.

"She did indeed," affirmed Burdick. "And, by the way," he added, "that note of mine—what will you do about that? Mr. Fenterton has pressed me for his, and I am really not ready to take this one up at present."

"It can rest for a little while, I guess," answered Kimberlee. "I came very near not having it to present at all. Of course you have heard of the adventure Mr. Fenterton and I had this morning."

"Yes, and it was a lucky thing that you captured the rascals. I forgot to inquire about it when I saw Mr. Fenterton, but of course it is known to everybody now. I hear the fellows have been bailed out."

"Yes, so I understand. They must have good backing somewhere. But, what is your business with me, Mr. Burdick?"

"I have a proposition to make to you."

"Yes? And what is it?"

"I want to get hold of that mare of yours, if you will part with her at anything like a reasonable price."

"Is that so? Well, this is something of a surprise to me; and it may be a surprise to you to learn that I want to get hold of Lady Lucy."

So it was. Burdick was trembling in eager anticipation. Was it possible that he might be able to make an even trade?

"It is a surprise indeed," he owned. "Perhaps we can strike up a bargain to effect a trade."

"I have no doubt of it."

"What will you do?"

"Well, considering the performance of Zuleika yesterday, I think I ought to have about five thousand to boot."

Burdick protested. He could not think of that. He would buy Zuleika at a fair figure, or he would trade even.

It was talked over for some time, and finally the latter arrangement was the one fixed upon. It was an even exchange, and it was promptly made.

The two great racers exchanged hands.

It had been agreed, too, that the note Kimberlee held should not be presented until after the Cedar Park Purse race, when Burdick felt sure that he would be in better condition to meet it.

The news of the trade was soon heralded, and it was a great subject for talking in racing circles. New interest was given to the coming race, and it was soon plain to be seen that that was destined to be the particular event of the season.

On the night of the exchange, as soon as Templeton Downdey came in from the city, Burdick hastened to carry the good news to him. But Downdey had already learned of it.

"I congratulate you!" he exclaimed. "Now we will line our pockets, and you will be put right on your feet again."

"It is not your fault that I am not placed somewhere else," Burdick declared, desiring to refer to the Simmins matter.

"How so? What do you mean?" Downdey asked.

"Have you not heard about the attempted highway robbery here to-day?"

"I did hear something about it, but paid no attention to it. What about it?"

"Nothing, only it was that man Simmins that you sent me, and I have had all I wanted to do to keep myself out of the mess. I have had all the risk, am ten thousand dollars further out, and the notes are as far away as ever—that is to say, one is. The other is out of existence at a cost of its face value."

"Whew! this is news. How did it happen?"

Burdick told the story, and when they came to study it over they could not lay the blame so strong upon Simmins after all. It looked as though he would have come out all right had it not been for the unexpected interference of Beth.

But, it is the unexpected that is always playing havoc with the plans of men, and especially of men of the criminal order.

The two men spent a jolly evening, congratulating each other over sundry bottles of wine upon the wondrous things they were to accomplish with Zuleika and Chinaman. They had it all laid out in prospect. The race was theirs. They would come off with crowns of glory for their animals, and with dollars in their pockets. They were about as happy as they well could be over the situation.

But, the race had not come off yet, and all was in anticipation. It was just barely possible that it might work the other way.

CHAPTER XIV.

A MOST DARING DEED DONE.

THE week passed swiftly by, and the eve of the day of the great Cedar Park Purse race was soon at hand.

It had been looked forward to with eager anticipation by thousands.

This was to be the race of all the races of the season. The meeting so far had been the best the course had ever known, and this race was expected to eclipse everything of the kind that had been presented.

The prospect was that it certainly would.

The main room of the Pansy Club House was crowded when, along in the evening, Beth Fenterton, Eugene Kimberlee and some friends entered.

It was no longer a secret who "Brown" was, and it had been made known that Beth was to ride Lady Lucy on the morrow.

This arrangement did not please the other side, but there was no way in which they could get around it that they could see, so they had to make the best of it. Alcander Burdick had his evil brain at work, however, and if he could balk that plan he meant to do it.

He and Downdey were in the best of spirits when Beth and Kimberlee entered the room, and were the center of an admiring circle of turfmen. It was thought that they had a pretty good thing in hand, and money was being put on their horses at odds of two to one.

Considering the performance of the other an-

imals, no one cared to offer any greater odds than that.

Beth Kimberlee joined the betting coterie, and immediately the attention of the whole room was upon the group.

"Well, gentlemen," inquired Kimberlee, "what odds are you laying on this race? Which horse seems to be the favorite?"

No need to ask the question, for he did not need any posting. It was an easy way of introducing himself, though.

"The favorite is Zuleika," answered Downdey, "with Chinaman for third place."

"Then you will allow Lady Lucy to come in second, eh?"

"She is pretty certain to do that."

"But, what odds?"

"Two to one," answered Burdick.

"Yes, we do not want to offer more," put in Murtagh, who was on hand as usual.

"Well, I do not intend to lay many bets at that figure, that I assure you," declared Kimberlee. "Still, it is better than nothing, I suppose."

"Yes, just by one."

"You are not as confident as you were at the other race, it seems," remarked Beth.

"We have that performance to guide us now," replied Burdick.

"There is one wager that I will lay with you, Mr. Burdick," said Kimberlee, and his tone was full of business.

"What is that?" Burdick asked.

"I will bet Lady Lucy against Zuleika and her worth in money, as you are giving two for one."

Burdick looked surprised.

"I did not suppose that you would be willing to risk the mare," he observed.

"Well, you see that I am. What do you say?"

"In offering two for one, we are talking about hard cash, not horses. I will not give you what you ask."

"Well, will you put your mare up against mine, on equal terms, the winner to take both? If you win you will have the finest pair in this State, and I will have the same if I win. What do you say to that?"

"I will do it," Burdick answered.

"Done! Let us have it in writing, so there can be no misunderstanding on either side," and Kimberlee whipped out his note-book and penciled the necessary words, calling upon the chairman of the club's committee to hold the stakes.

Burdick followed his example, and the great wager was laid.

This was something new, and the hum of comment over the proposition grew into a regular buzz when the wager was consummated.

"How would you like to risk Faustina against Chinaman, on the same terms, Mr. Burdick?" inquired Downdey.

It was known now that Beth was the owner of Faustina, the deal between him and Mr. Phillips having been let out.

"I do not know that I care to win the animal," answered Beth.

"You speak with the utmost confidence, sir," returned Downdey. "Do you think that Faustina is going to come in for third place?"

"I think she will."

"Well, you are about the only one who thinks so, then, I guess."

"By the way, who is to ride Zuleika, if I may ask?" inquired Kimberlee.

"A man named Watkims, a stranger here," answered Burdick.

This was Dennising, as of course the reader knows, that arrangement having been made with him. The young man had carried himself straight during the week, and was as eager to win the race as Burdick was to have him win it.

"Of course you will ride Lady Lucy," Burdick remarked, turning to Beth.

"That is the arrangement," Beth acknowledged.

"And you are confident of winning, I suppose?"

"I certainly am."

"How confident are you?" with a daring, or bantering, smile.

"I am confident to the tune of five to one against Zuleika," Beth answered in the coolest manner imaginable.

Burdick turned pale.

"You certainly cannot mean it," he ejaculated.

"Try me and see," was the invitation.

"By Harry, but I will! Here is five thousand dollars for you to cover at that rate."

Beth was prepared to do it, and the wager was promptly laid. Beth had his former winnings with him, and was prepared to risk them.

"Here is five more, at the same rate," cried Downdey, eager for the offer.

Again Beth covered the amount, and the stakes were turned over to the committee.

The excitement ran wild.

"Five more right here," shouted out Murtagh, thirsting for the golden opportunity.

"I have only twenty-four left," said Beth.

"No matter, that is near enough."

That wager, too, was soon recorded, and the word went like wildfire that Beth Fenterton had placed seventy-four thousand dollars against fifteen that Lady Lucy would win the race.

The talent began to do some figuring to see where the daring young man was getting his ideas that Lady Lucy could win. Her best previous record had been three thirty-two, which she had now reduced by a quarter of a minute, and it did not seem possible that she should ever do any better than that.

They did not know the mare as Beth did.

Everybody was hungry to get some of that five-to-one stock, and if Beth had had a million dollars, it is likely that he could have found takers for the whole amount in sums to suit.

Kimberlee made one or two good bets, and some minor ones, and he and Beth took their leave.

They left the place in a perfect whirl of excitement. Never had anything of like importance been seen there, unless it was on the Hippogriff event of the previous week.

Burdick and Downdey soon withdrew from the room, and held a consultation. It was clear that their confidence had grown shaky. What did it mean? Was Beth Fenterton betting on a sure thing?

They went to the stable where Zuleika was, and doubled the guard over her so that no underhand work could be attempted in that quarter.

Then they paused to reflect.

Burdick had been thinking in a certain line, and now he put his thoughts into words:

"Beth Fenterton shall not ride to-morrow!" he declared.

"My own thought exactly!" exclaimed Downdey. "But, how are we to bring it about?"

"Money will do it."

They walked on toward the club-house, talking as they went.

That night Beth intended sleeping in the stable, and when he parted with Kimberlee, about eleven o'clock, he went in that direction.

It was dark, but he knew the ground well, and was going forward at a good pace when, just as he turned into the yard, two men sprung upon him and bore him to the ground.

It was a surprise complete, and he had no time to offer resistance.

A hand was held over his mouth to prevent any outcry, and in a short time he was bound and gagged.

He knew what it meant, and that the race was lost. It was not likely that he would be allowed to regain his freedom until after it was all over.

As soon as he was made secure he was lifted up and carried to a waiting carriage, thrust into it, the men getting in with him, and the vehicle whirled rapidly away before any one could interfere or learn what had happened.

Next morning, almost as soon as it was light, Kimberlee went out to the stables to see Beth, and to learn the condition of Lady Lucy.

What was his dismay, when told that Beth had not been there.

He suspected foul play immediately, but knew that it would be useless for him to rave and howl, so he set quietly to work in a systematic manner.

There were some hours before the time of the race, and plenty of time for him to summon aid from the city. He went to the telegraph office and wired for a detective, one of the best that could be sent.

In three hours the man was on hand, and Kimberlee gave him the case, telling him everything about the previous race, and the attending incidents, so that his mind could have free scope of the whole field and fix its own conclusions.

"Burdick is the man," the detective declared, as soon as he had heard all.

"That is my suspicion, too," affirmed Kimberlee.

"I will undertake the task, and of course I will find the missing man, but it is doubtful whether he will be on hand for the race or not. You had better get another man for his place."

"Do you think he has been killed?"

"Oh, no; he is merely being detained in some hole or other, and will be set at liberty as soon as the race is over."

Kimberlee was in a bad fix, but he could do no more than he had done, and, if Beth could not be found, he knew the race was lost.

He kept his secret and waited.

CHAPTER XV.

BETH WINS AGAIN!

THE day was a most favorable one.

Never had the track been in better condition, not even on the day of the great Hippogriff Handicap, and at daylight many persons were already on hand for admission to the grand stand.

When the hour of opening came, thousands were ready to pour in, and the lawns were literally packed.

As on the day of the Hippogriff Handicap, no sooner were the programmes out, and the posters up, than they were eagerly consulted by the anxious multitudes. And, as on that day, the first race was a comparatively tame affair, followed by the greatest of all—the Cedar Park Purse Handicap.

The programme of that race was as follows:

SECOND CONTEST.

THE CEDAR PARK PURSE HANDICAP RACE.

This race is to be a sweepstakes of \$50 each, half forfeit, for the Cedar Park Purse of \$5,000, with \$5,000 added, of which \$750 to second and \$250 to third; two miles. The horses entered for this race, with weights, are:

Zuleika	130	Faustina	120
Lady Lucy	130	Get There	115
Chinaman	120	Docile	115
Minion	115		

It was considered a good one, and the change in some of the weights gave the talent plenty to do to settle their minds as to how they should lay their money.

Long before the hour for the first race came the grand stand was packed and as on the other great occasion, men and women were full of enthusiasm. The crowd at the course was far larger than it had been on the other great day. The reports of the big betting had been carried forth, and everybody and his neighbors were bound to see the run, if possible to do so.

Mr. Fenterton and his party were there again, nearly in their former place, and all eager to see the great run between the two great flyers.

On this occasion they were not troubled with Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey, though they undoubtedly would have been had it been possible for the pair to have got to them. They appeared once, but the density of the crowd deterred them from making the attempt, for which the ladies were duly thankful.

The first race was called, and the crowd seemed to take it as a sort of appetizer for what was to follow. It was a good one, and the betting was fair, but it did not awaken much applause. It was won by the favorite, by two good lengths.

When the track was cleared, then the grand stand began to hum with the buzz of conversation, and the humming grew louder and louder as the time for the start drew near and the starters were soon expected at the post.

In the mean time what of Kimberlee? He was in a desperate mood. He had found a man to ride Lady Lucy, having it understood that he must give way to Beth Fenterton, even at the last moment, if he should appear, but he had no hope now that Beth would come or that he would win the race.

He had not seen his detective since parting with him, although he was watching for him constantly.

Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey observed him, and were highly pleased over the success of their cute trick. It had worked well, and they had managed it in such a way that they had little fear that they could ever be implicated in it.

The time for the great race came, and the bugle sounded.

Immediately a bush fell over the audience, as all eyes were turned toward the post.

The first to reach that point was Get There, which incident raised a little ripple of laughter, and the remark that if he were as successful at the finish he would prove the fitness of his name. Next was Chinaman, and then it was noticed that Zuleika and Lady Lucy were being led past the stand.

They were greeted with a rousing cheer, which they seemed rather to enjoy,

"Why, where is Beth, papa?" exclaimed Gracienna Fenterton, who was the first of that party to notice that a stranger had Lady Lucy in charge.

"He is not there!" cried Eudora Cranston.

"Sure enough," admitted Mr. Fenterton,

"he is not there, and where can he be? What can have happened to the boy? I am afraid the race will go to Zuleika."

By this time many others had noticed Seth's absence, and comment was general.

The two favorites went on to the post, and the line was just forming when a great shout was heard in the crowd on the lawn, and a man on foot was seen coming over the space between the stretches, running at his best speed and waving his hat.

It was Beth Fenterton.

Kimberlee invaded the forbidden ground to welcome him, saying a few hurried words to the starter, and the jockey on Lady Lucy went forward and dismounted.

This caused a great stir on the lawn and in the stand.

Beth threw off his hat, coat and vest, donned the cap and waist of the jockey whose place he was taking, mounted and rode to the scales to be registered. That done, he hurried to the post to take his place for the start.

Kimberlee was overjoyed, as were Mr. Fenterton and his party, but Burdick and Downdey gnashed their teeth in rage.

There were only six starters, Minion having withdrawn, and after one or two trials a good start was had and the flag was given.

They were all off like a flight of rockets.

Zuleika and Lady Lucy were as nearly even as could be possible, and were in the lead by half a length, Chinaman coming next, a neck ahead of Faustina. Get There and Docile were about on equal terms, half a length behind Faustina at the wire.

A thunder of applause was awakened as the favorites dashed away down the stretch, and as the others scrambled after them, as though determined that they should not have all the honors to themselves.

The colors worn by the riders were the same as in the other race. Zuleika had the red and gold; Lady Lucy had the blue and white; Chinaman had the all yellow; Docile had the white and red; Faustina the red and green; and Get There, all red.

At the turn it was noticed that Lady Lucy was slightly ahead. The rider of Zuleika, who, as we know, was the rascally Dennising, was trying to imitate the riding of Beth in the other race. He would hold back on the first round, run up in the second, and come in with a rush on the homestretch. Such was his intention.

But he soon found that he had to change his plans considerably. Lady Lucy was running hard, and at the half-post was a length and more ahead of Zuleika. In the other race she had been only half a length ahead at this point.

Dennising remembered this, and urged Zuleika up, trying to recover the lost ground. He wanted to keep this race on about the same footing as the other. But his plans were more easily laid than carried out. Zuleika gained a little, but it was only for a spurt, and then it was all she wanted to do to hold the ground she had.

Beth was pushing on hard, and at the bend the relative positions of the two favorites were about the same.

The others, too, were pressing on, and Chinaman and Faustina were having a desperate struggle for third place. They were about neck and neck, and were running hard. They were a length behind Zuleika. After them came Docile, with Get There in the rear.

Around the bend they flew, and were just entering the stretch when an exciting thing happened. The girth of Lady Lucy's saddle suddenly parted, the saddle swung over, and Beth was almost thrown to the ground; as it was he barely saved himself by grabbing the mare's mane and withers, and by a mighty effort sprung clear of the saddle and allowed it to fall.

Lady Lucy had reared, at the first, and was now almost at a stop, and when Beth recovered his position Zuleika was three lengths ahead, and the others were passing him.

It was in plain sight from the grand stand, and an appalling bush had fallen over the audience. When Beth started forward again, however, and riding bareback, then the applause broke out.

Passing under the wire, Lady Lucy was the very last horse in the race, and Zuleika was no less than four lengths ahead. But, Lady Lucy was extending herself at her best, and Seth sat upon her as though he were a part of her.

Wave after wave of applause swept over the grand stand and the lawn, and the fluttering of handkerchiefs was constant.

Eudora Cranston and Gracienna Fenterton could not control themselves, but waved their

handkerchiefs wildly, and cheered Beth on as loudly as the loudest.

Every horse was now running at its best, and neither whip nor spur was spared. Having such a lead, the rascal Dennising was bound to keep it, and he was crowding Zuleika without mercy. It was the same with the others, who were all eager for place. It was now the ambition of every one to come in second ahead of Lady Lucy.

But, they were doomed to disappointment. In rounding the bend Lady Lucy came up with them, and entering the backstretch she was on equal line with Faustina, who now was leading Chinaman by a head.

At the half-post Lady Lucy had recovered half the lost distance, and Zuleika was two lengths ahead. Faustina came next, and was now running right away from Chinaman, who gave out before the turn was reached, as did Docile. The hard running was too much for them. Get There was a furlong in the rear, but was coming.

To describe the excitement at the grand stand is next to impossible. Men and women were beside themselves. Canes and parasols were broken by the score, by the frantic pounding they were subjected to, while handkerchiefs and hats were tossed in the air regardless of everything. The shouting was one mighty roar.

On, on, around the bend and into the home-stretch came the favorites, and as they straightened for the last effort the riders sat down for the struggle.

Lady Lucy was only a length behind, and Bareback Beth, as he was now called by one and all, was urging her as only he knew how. He was not harsh, but seemed to be talking to the pretty animal, as he lay forward and kept her motion perfectly, as though helping her in the grand effort.

Zuleika was doing her best, and contrary to what Beth Fenterton had predicted, was likely to hold out. But she was not making the speed he had got out of her in the last spurt in the other run. It was too late for that now. It had been required of her too early in the race. She was doing her best, but Lady Lucy was doing better.

Lady Lucy had more bottom than any other horse on the track, or in the stables either, for that matter, and it was bottom that was required in races of such length. It is owing to that, no doubt, that long-distance races are going out of fashion.

At the furlong Lady Lucy had closed up the gap, and from that point every one of her powerful leaps carried her nearer the front. Get There had dropped out, but Faustina was coming on, half a furlong in the rear of Lucy.

On they rushed, as only such flyers can, but at twenty rods from the wire the noble Zuleika gave out and slackened, in spite of all the efforts of her rider, and Lady Lucy sped away from her like an arrow.

On came Faustina, and won the second place by just a neck.

The cheering of the crowd was tremendous, and the grand stand fairly groaned beneath the wild stamping of feet and pounding of canes. The glory of the Hippogriff day was dimmed in comparison with this. Men rushed into the forbidden ground regardless of everything, and making straight for Beth Fenterton, they caught him up on their shoulders and carried him away toward the Pansy Club House, shouting as they proceeded:

"Rah, 'rah, 'rah! Hurrah for Bareback Beth! Three cheers for the bareback rider—the Centaur of the Circle!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE APPROPRIATE ENDING.

In the mean time, the saddle dropped by Lady Lucy had been taken from the track, and had been handed over to Eugene Kimberlee.

An examination of it revealed a startling truth. The stitching underneath, where the girth was fastened, had been ripped by a keen knife, leaving barely half a dozen threads to withstand the strain that would be put upon it.

It was the revelation of a dastardly deed, and the author of it was suspected. It might have been the cause of Beth Fenterton's death, or that of the other rider, had he not appeared; and it was a serious offense.

Kimberlee's detective joined him about the time that he received the saddle, and as soon as the truth was discovered Kimberlee put the case into his hands. The detective took the saddle, and went off toward the stables.

As soon as the race was over, Kimberlee went forward and took charge of both Lady Lucy and Zuleika, and his men led them to his stable. Beth's men took Faustina off, and care was taken that no harm came to any of the winners. Knowing the desperate mood of the defeated men, the precautions were wise.

Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey were wild over their defeat, and were going to do great things. It was a cheat, they charged, and there was nothing fair in the race at all. That bareback business was merely a trick to gain advantage. Lady Lucy could never have made such a run with her saddle on. She was under-weighted.

These charges and many others were openly made, but they had no effect. The truth about the dropping of the saddle was well known, and no sane jockey would have attempted such a thing on purpose. And, too, Beth Fenterton's weight was known to all. If anything, Lady Lucy had carried more than her share of the burden.

Burdick and Downdey went to the club-house, where, in their desperation, they ordered their wagers not to be paid until the matter had been referred to the committee. Kimberlee had the advantage of them in that, however, so far as Zuleika was concerned.

When the judges' report was given out, it was as follows:

"The Cedar Park Purse Handicap, a sweepstakes of \$50 each, half forfeit, for the Cedar Park Purse of \$5,000, with \$5,000 added, of which \$750 to second and \$250 to third; two miles.

Eugene Kimberlee's ch. m. Lady Lucy, 130 (Mr. Fenterton n).....	1
Eth Fenterton's b. m. Faustine, 120 (Howards).....	2
Alcander Burdick's bl. m. Zuleika 130 (Watkins).....	3

Time: 3:31—3:31½—3:32."

The committee considered the matter, and without hesitation, awarded the money to the winners and the wagers to the successful backers.

Downdey and Burdick were defeated all around.

There was more to follow. Barely had the committee given their decision, when Kimberlee's detective came into the room with a prisoner, one of the stablemen who had had charge of Lady Lucy, bringing with him the saddle.

"This man," announced the detective, "has confessed that he damaged this saddle just before it was put on the mare, and asserts that he was hired to do so."

"Is this the truth?" demanded the chairman of the committee.

Burdick was moving toward the door, but the detective blocked his way.

"It is so," answered the rascally hostler.

"And who was the person who hired you to do it?" was the next question.

"There he stands," pointing to Burdick. "He gev me a hundred dollars to do th' thing fur him."

A thunderbolt could not have occasioned more surprise.

"It is a lie!" cried Burdick.

"It is the truth," asserted the detective, calmly. "Nor is that all. It was by you and this man Downdey that Beth Fenterton was carried away last night, and it was by me that he was discovered in the old house where you had him confined. There is no use for you to try to deny it, for it is the truth, and I am prepared to prove it."

"It is a lie!" cried Burdick and Downdey together. "It is a plot hatched up to ruin us. You can't prove any of it, and we defy you to do it."

"Very well, you shall see the proof."

The men were desperate, and were willing to risk all, to dare all, but the detective was more than a match for them. He had the proof that was necessary.

The detective called out a name, and a man came forward. He was the person who had driven the carriage that had taken Beth to his place of imprisonment.

At sight of him the two rascals paled, and acted as though they would like to get out and away. But they were not allowed the chance.

The chairman of the committee offered them a hearing in private, which they were not slow to accept.

There the detective presented his case, and when he had done there was nothing left for the men to stand on, and they had to own up. It was a bitter dose, but their schemes had all miscarried, and they had to face the music.

The result was that both were ignominiously expelled from the Association.

It might have been carried further, but Beth and Kimberlee were willing to let it drop, think-

ing that the unprincipled jockeys had been punished enough for their villainy.

Kimberlee's next move was to present the note which he held, and which, if he had pressed it, would have about swamped the Burdick estate. But he was lenient. When he went to see Burdick, he said:

"Here is this note which I hold against you. I have no desire to beggar you, but I ought to make you pay every dollar of it. I am willing to give you a chance. If you feel inclined to pay one quarter of it without trouble, I will put the note into your hands. I do not do this because I have no right to my winnings, but I do it because I think you have been well punished. I took up the case for Mr. Fenterton, whom you have treated shamefully, considering what friends he and your father were. I am glad you were defeated at the races, and I am glad that you have been caught and exposed in your dirty trickery."

Young Burdick was glad to get the note in on those terms, and lost no time in doing so.

Beth Fenterton collected his winnings, and was placed right on his feet. So was his father. With the help Kimberlee had given them, they had played a good hand, and had come out on top.

True to his word, Kimberlee gave Lady Lucy back to her rightful owner, and Mr. Fenterton almost wept tears of joy over the repossession of his much-loved animal.

Kimberlee retained Zuleika, and Beth riding her for him occasionally, she has gained renown on the track, as also has Faustina. As for Lady Lucy, she is yet the peerless queen of the turf in her native State.

In the course of time there were two notable weddings near the town of Hunterford. Both took place on the same evening. One was that of Bethel Fenterton to Miss Eudora Cranston, and the other was that of Eugene Kimberlee to Gracienna Fenterton.

It was a jubilee occasion, as may well be imagined.

Algernon Fenterton, with his business now in good shape, and the debt lifted from his shoulders, was himself once more, and he added to the cheer of the occasion.

Two persons who were not there were Alcander Burdick and Templeton Downdey. Two who were there were Jack Cranston and 'Squire Heatherly.

At the dancing, after the ceremony, no person on the floor lifted lighter heels than the 'Squire, as he swung Mr. Fenterton to the time of lively music, just as he had used to do in the "Ould Lang Syne" before Mrs. Fenterton came along and got the inside track on the homestretch—as he expressed it.

When matters had calmed down, Mr. Fenterton went to see Alcander Burdick, and had a talk with him. He told him plainly that his part in the attempted highway robbery was fully known, but that, owing to the friendship which he had had with his father, Leonard Burdick, he would keep the matter secret.

The young man was stubborn, but had the good sense to accept the conditions, and promised that he would try to follow, for the rest of his life, his father's honorable footsteps.

The two highwaymen were never heard of, and the bail was forfeited to the county. It was never brought into question by anybody, and few persons knew the truth, or suspected it.

Lambert Murtagh is still following his business, and, like most of his ilk, is making money.

Bob Dennising drifted out of sight, and nothing is known of him.

Kimberlee's detective was well rewarded for his neat work, and is still in the harness.

Simmins, the ex-detective, was never seen near Hunterford. What became of him it is hard to tell.

The Hippogriff Racing Association still flourishes, and so does the Cedar Park Course and the Pansy Club House. Races come off every season, and are well attended, but it is doubtful whether they have any now as exciting as those of which we have written this veracious record.

Certain it is that those two races are vividly remembered, and the veterans of the turf never tire of telling of them; and, as the events are gone over, the central figure of all is that of Bareback Beth, the Centaur of the Circle.

THE END.

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 379 Larry, the Leveler; or, The Bloods of the Boulevard.
 403 Firefly Jack, the River-Rat Detective.
 423 The Lost Finger; or, The Entrapped Cashier.
 428 Fred Flyer, the Reporter Detective.
 432 Invincible Logan, the Pinkerton Ferret.
 456 Billy Brick, the Jolly Vagabond.
 466 Wide-Awake Jerry, Detective; or, Entombed Alive.
 479 Detective Dodge; or, The Mystery of Frank Hearty.
 488 Wild Dick Racket.
 501 Boots, the Boy Fireman; or, Too Sharp for the Sharper.
 566 The Secret Service Boy Detective.
 596 Jimmy the Kid; or, A Lamb Among Wolves.

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5 Vagabond Joe, the Young Wandering Jew.
 13 The Dumb Spy.
 27 Antelope Abe, the Boy Guide.
 31 Keen-Knife, the Prince of the Prairies.
 41 Lasso Jack, the Young Mustanger.
 58 The Border King; or, The Secret Foe.
 71 Delaware Dick, the Young Ranger Spy.
 74 Hawk-eye Harry, the Young Trapper Ranger.
 83 Rollo, the Boy Ranger.
 184 Sure Shot Seth, the Boy Rifleman.
 143 Scar-Face Saul, the Silent Hunter.
 146 Silver Star, the Boy Knight.
 153 Eagle Kit, the Boy Demon.
 168 Little Texas, the Young Mustanger.
 178 Old Solitary, the Hermit Trapper.
 182 Little Hurricane, the Boy Captain.
 202 Prospect Pete; or, The Young Outlaw Hunters.
 208 The Boy Hercules; or, The Prairie Tramps.
 218 Tiger Tom, the Texas Terror.
 224 Dashing Dick; or, Trapper Tom's Castle.
 228 Little Wildfire, the Young Prairie Nomad.
 238 The Parson Detective; or, The Little Ranger.
 243 The Disguised Guide; or, Wild Raven, the Ranger.
 260 Dare-Devil Dan, the Young Prairie Ranger.
 272 Minkskin Mike, the Boy Sharpshooter.
 290 Little Foxfire, the Boy Spy.
 300 The Sky Demon; or, Rainbolt, the Ranger.
 384 Whip-King Joe, the Boy Ranchero.
 409 Hercules; or, Dick, the Boy Ranger.
 417 Webfoot Mose, the Tramp Detective.
 422 Baby Sam, the Boy Giant of the Yellowstone.
 444 Little Buckskin, the Young Prairie Centaur.
 457 Wingedfoot Fred; or, Old Polar Saul.
 463 Tamarac Tom, the Big Trapper Boy.
 478 Old Tom Rattler, the Red River Epidemic.
 482 Stonewall Bob, the Boy Trojan.
 562 Blundering Basil, the Hermit Boy Trapper.

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23 Nick o' the Night; or, The Boy Spy of '76.
 37 The Hidden Lodge; or, The Little Hunter.
 47 Nightingale Nat; or, The Forest Captain.
 64 Dandy Jack; or, The Outlaws of the Oregon Trail.
 82 Kit Harefoot, the Wood-Hawk.
 94 Midnight Jack; or, The Boy Trapper.
 106 Old Frosty, the Guide; or, The White Queen.
 123 Klown Charley, the White Mustanger.
 139 Judge Lynch, Jr.; or, The Boy Vigilante.
 155 Gold Trigger, the Sport; or, The Girl Avenger.
 169 Tornado Tom; or, Injun Jack from Red Core.
 188 Ned Temple, the Border Boy.
 198 Arkansaw; or, The Queen of Fate's Revenge.
 207 Navajo Nick, the Boy Gold Hunter.
 215 Captain Bullet; or, Little Tonknot's Crusade.
 231 Plucky Phil; or, Rosa, the Red Jezebel.
 241 Bill Bravo; or, The Roughs of the Rockies.
 255 Captain Apollo; or, The King-Pin of Bowie.
 267 The Buckskin Detective.
 279 Old Winch; or, The Buckskin Desperadoes.
 294 Dynamite Dan; or, The Bowie Blade of Cochetopa.
 302 The Mountain Detective; or, The Trigger Bar Bully.
 316 Old Eclipse, Trump Card of Arizona.
 326 The Ten Pards; or, The Terror of Take-Notice.
 336 Big Benson; or, The Queen of the Lasso.
 345 Pitiless Matt; or, Red Thunderbolt's Secret.
 356 Cool Sam and Pard; or, The Terrible Six.
 366 Velvet Foot, the Indian Detective.
 384 Captain Cutlass; or, The Bucaneer's Girl Foe.
 396 Rough Rob; or, The Twin Champions of Blue Blazes.
 411 The Silken Lasso; or, The Rose of Ranch Robin.
 418 Felix Fox, the Boy Spotter.
 425 Texas Trump, the Border Rattler.
 436 Phil Flash, the New York Fox.
 445 The City Vampires; or, Red Rolfe's Pigeon.
 461 One Against Fifty; or, The Last Man of Keno Bar.
 470 The Boy Shadow; or, Felix Fox's Hunt.
 477 The Excelsior Sport; or, The Washington Spotter.
 499 Single Sight, the One-Eyed Sport.
 502 Branded Ben, the Night Ferret.
 512 Dodger Dick, the Wharf-Spy Detective.
 521 Dodger Dick's Best Dodge.
 528 Fox and Falcon, the Bowery Shadows.
 538 Dodger Dick, the Dock Ferret.
 543 Dodger Dick's Double; or, The Rival Boy Detectives.
 553 Dodger Dick's Desperate Case.
 563 Dodger Dick, the Boy Videoc.
 573 The Two Shadows.
 582 Dodger Dick's Drop.
 594 Little Lon, the Street-Singer Detective.
 610 Old Skinner, the Gold Shark; or, Tony Sharp on Guard.

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7 The Flying Yankee; or, The Ocean Outcast.
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 24 Diamond Dirk; or, The Mystery of the Yellowstone.
 62 The Shadow Ship; or, The Rival Lieutenants.
 75 The Boy Enlist; or, The Cruise of the Sea-Wolf.
 102 Dick Dead-Eye, the Boy Smuggler.
 111 The Sea-Devil; or, The Midshipman's Legacy.
 116 The Hussar Captain; or, The Hermit of Hell Gate.
 197 Little Grit; or, Bessie, the Stock-Tender's Daughter.
 204 Gold Plume; or, The Kid-Glove Sport.
 216 Bison Bill, the Prince of the Reins.
 222 Grit, the Bravo Sport; or, The Woman Trailer.
 229 Crimson Kate; or, The Cowboy's Triumph.
 237 Lone Star, the Cowboy Captain.
 245 Merle, the Middy; or, The Freelance Heir.
 250 The Midshipman Mutineer; or, Brandt, the Buccaneer.
 264 The Floating Feather; or, Merle Monte's Treasure Island.
 269 The Gold Ship; or, Merle, the Condemned.
 276 Merle Monte's Cruise; or, The Chase of "The Gold Ship."
 280 Merle Monte's Fate; or, Pearl, the Pirate's Bride.
 284 The Sea Marauder; or, Merle Monte's Pledge.
 287 Billy Blue-Eyes, the Boy Rover of the Rio Grande.
 304 The Dead Shot Dandy; or, Benito, the Boy Bugler.
 308 Keno Kit; or, Dead Shot Dandy's Double.
 314 The Mysterious Marauder; or, The Boy Bugler's Long Trail.
 377 Bonedel, the Boy Rover; or, The Flagless Schooner.
 383 The Indian Pilot; or, The Search for Pirate Island.
 387 Warpath Will, the Boy Phantom.
 398 Seawolf, the Boy Lieutenant.
 402 Isodor, the Young Conspirator; or, The Fatal League.
 407 The Boy Insurgent; or, The Cuban Vendetta.
 412 The Wild Yachtsman; or, The War-Cloud's Cruise.
 429 Duncan Dare, the Boy Refugee.
 438 A Cabin Boy's Luck; or, The Corsair.
 437 The Sea Raider.
 441 The Ocean Firefly; or, A Middy's Vengeance.
 446 Haphazard Harry; or, The Scapgegrace of the Sea.
 450 Wizard Will; or, The Boy Ferret of New York.
 454 Wizard Will's Street Scouts.
 462 The Born Guide; or, The Sailor Boy Wanderer.
 468 Neptune Ned, the Boy Coaster.
 474 Flora; or, Wizard Will's Vagabond Pard.
 483 Ferrets Aloft; or, Wizard Will's Last Case.
 487 Nevada Ned, the Revolver Ranger.
 495 Arizona Joe, the Boy Pard of Texas Jack.
 497 Buck Taylor, King of the Cowboys.
 503 The Royal Middy; or, The Shark and the Sea Cat.
 507 The Hunted Midshipman.
 511 The Outlawed Middy.
 520 Buckskin Bill, the Comanche Shadow.
 525 Brothers in Buckskin.
 530 The Buckskin Bowers.
 535 The Buck-skin Rovers.
 540 Captain Ku-Klux, the Marauder of the Rio.
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 550 Lafitte's Legacy; or, The Avenging Son.
 555 The Creole Corsair.
 560 Pawnee Bill, the Prairie Shadower.
 565 Kent Kingdon, the Card King.
 570 Camille, the Card Queen.
 575 The Surgeon-Scout Detective.
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 586 The Buckskin Avenger.
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